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Welcome to X360...



The excitement of a new console launch is undeniable. Seriously, industry folk who are usually calm visibly wilt when they begin discussing their newest Xbox 360 masterpiece. Phone calls roll in from PRs and developers start listing off the games they want at launch – it's at this point that company loyalty vanishes. The

buzz at the moment is so great I imagine Microsoft execs are excitedly pulling pictures from their wallets to show off their new baby boy... Xbox 360.

At the centre of this need to exercise such enthusiasm is yours truly, and my new team of equally excitable writers. The morning that news of the X360 price broke, we were all on the internet pre-ordering hardware and reeling off our preferred launch-day games to buy – Jay needs *Dead Or Alive 4*, Ryan can't live without *Project Gotham Racing 3* and Keith just wants to get old-school with *Quake 4*. Me? I'm simply looking forward to a country break in *Elder Scrolls*, sitting in the local alehouse larking about with a medieval wench.

So what will you be doing at X360's launch this December? Well, hopefully that's where we'll help you out. Every month we'll make it our priority to deliver the latest news, exclusive screens and first-hand coverage of Xbox 360's biggest games – this issue we've been to see *Project Gotham Racing 3* in action, experienced *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* and flown to Poland to play *Call Of Duty 2*. Plus, the fanboy in us tracked down *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *NiGHTS* creator Yuji Naka to get the scoop on *Sonic Next-Gen* – turn to page 96 for the first screens.

Now that's enough chatter, it's time to get down to the serious business of pawing through our first issue, go on, skip over the page...

lan Dean

Editor

PS Microsoft has got it right this time. This is the overriding opinion of everyone who has seen the Xbox 360 in action and paid close attention to Microsoft's plans for its new super console.

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X360 MAGAZINE Every month we bring you fantastic games and fearless opinion



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Xbox 360
Release dates revealed!

Just before we went to print Microsoft announced the release dates of the Xbox 360 hardware, here are the dates you need to circle in your calendar: **UK release**, **2 December**; US release, 22 November; Japanese release 10 December. Remember where you read it first! For news on the prices and peripheral costs, turn to page 18.

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CONTENTS

X360 REGULARS 08 COVER

Quake 4 World Exclusive 16 LETTERS

Your rants and worries

18 NETWORK

Every known Xbox 360 game 51 PREVIEWS

Scorching new DOA 4 screens

44 FEATURES

Inside the Xbox 360 and Sega exposed

40 NEW GAMES

Alan Wake Amped 3 41 Dead Rising 37 Demonik 37 Call Of Duty 2 60 Chrome Hounds 22 Condemned 100 Dead Or Alive 4 78 Elder Scrolls IV: 82 Oblivion Final Fantasy XI 68 Frame City Killer 88 Full Auto 99 Football Manager 23 2006 Gears Of War 90 Ghost Recon: 30 AW Gun 62 28 Halo 3 24 Kameo 39 Killing Day LMA Manager 23 2006 72 Prey Perfect Dark 7ero 80 NBA 2K6 93 Need For Speed Most Wanted 92 Marvel Universe 109 Ninety-Nine **Nights** 40 Ridge Racer 6 108 Resident Evil 5 58 Rumble Roses 27 XX Quake 4 08 Saint's Row 41 Sonic Next-Gen 96 Test Drive 70 Unlimited The Godfather 93 The Outfit 41 Tiger Woods PGA 92 TimeShift 41 Top Spin 2 93 Unreal 2007 24

Virtua Fighter 5

29





ON THE

Quake 4, and PGR3, plus an exclusive virtual tour of the X360

107 COMMUNITY

127 NEXT MONTH

Dedicated Xbox Live coverage Next issue's killer running list



NETWORK

018 XBOX 360 PRICES REVEALED

Pre-order yours now!

030 GHOST RECON 3

New screenshots and info on Ubisoft's thrilling shooter

036 IN THE WORKS

Every known or rumoured game in one easy to use listing

FEATURES

044 XBOX 360: BEHIND THE SPIN

The Xbox 360 hardware analysed

Og6 SEGA: THE NEW AGE
One of the biggest developers in the business opens its doors to X360

114 LIVE EXPLAINED

Everything you need to know about Xbox Live on X360

COMMUNITY

108 NEWS: RIDGE RACER 6

Namco releases details of its flagship racer's online modes

110 CLANS: PMS

The girls chat to **X360** about gaming, Live and irritating men

1 22 REVIEWS

DVD, music, book and hardware releases are rated





PREVIEWS

08 Quake 4 exclusive

52 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3
Our man visits Bizarre Creations to see the best racer in the world up close

58 Resident Evil 5 **60** Call Of Duty 2

62

GUN

First-hand impressions of Neversoft's expansive Western adventure

68 Final Fantasy

70 Test Drive Unlimited

72 Prey



DEAD OR ALIVE 4

Stunning new screens of Tecmo's beautifu

80 Perfect Dark Zero

82 Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion

88 Frame City Killer

90 Gears Of War



NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

Street racing comes of age on X360

92 Tiger Woods PGA 06

93 Top Spin 2

93 NBA 2K6

93 The Godfather

Meet the team



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Always quiet, the best way to get a reaction from Andy is to just stand behind him and watch him work. Five seconds is all it takes for him to turn violent. Art types are so testy.

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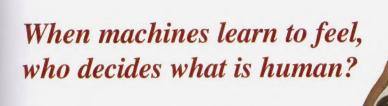
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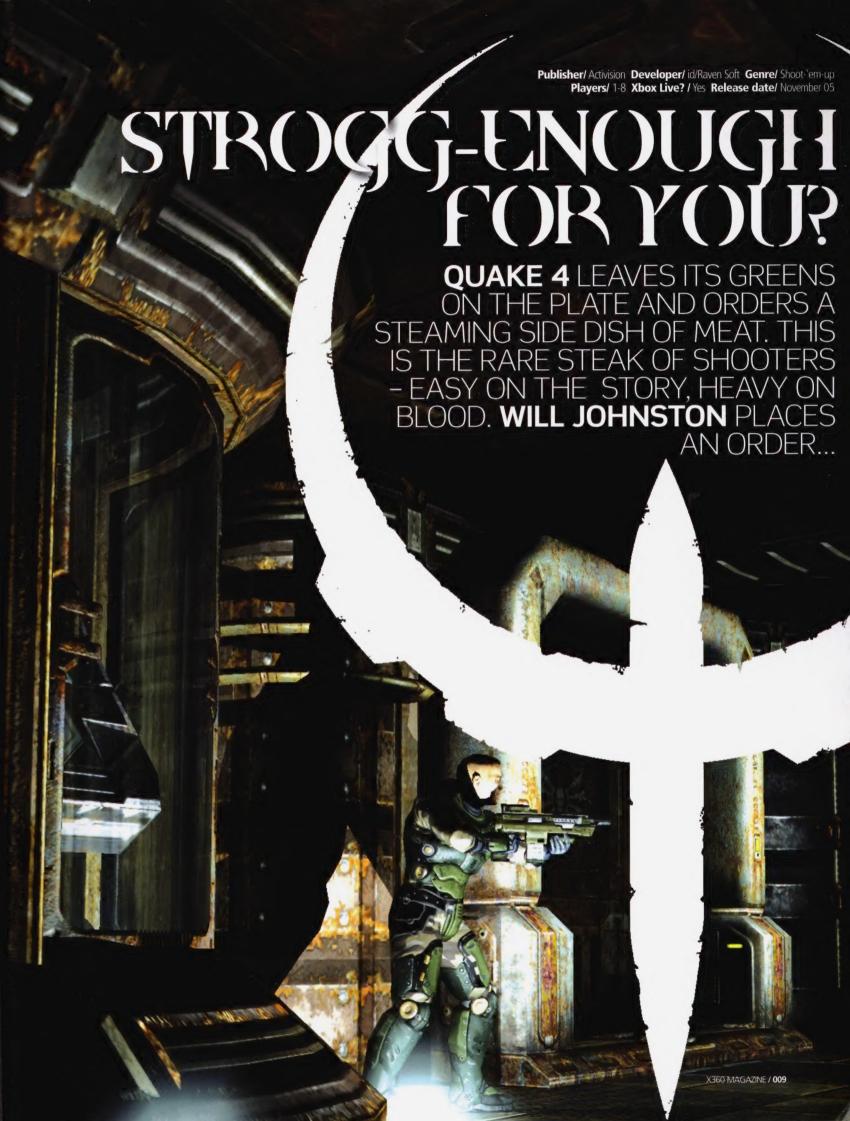
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demons of large amount and variety; dark corridors, flickering lights and hulking great beasts pounding

out of the shadows and there's your game. Scary,

Games are products that adapt to survive, and are susceptible to being infected by the ideas of others. Narrative structures are no longer just the hooks that hold it together; they have to be part of the reason the game is played, and are often a big suspect when trying to work out why a game kinda sucked. Doom didn't have a story worthy of study, but was designed from the bottom up as a shooting game set in a maze, and excelled at being so. The fact that the enemy were beasts from another dimension and plentiful was one reason, and reason enough, why you would be happy to kill them for a few hours. Get the key card. Kill the enemy. Get out. Get spooked.

id Software's Quake was an evolution of Doom's premise through technology. It used surface caching on light-mapped polygons to create its characters, and it used as much power suitable ingredients for an intense experience.

This ability to adapt to new grounds, while retaining the strength of its basic, violently passionate heart, serves you Quake 4 on Xbox 360. New Technology and time to cock a leg at the dogmatic design principles of the past. It's time to see what happens when id's most iconic product, and its history of quality adaptation, hook onto the possibilities of the now.

"The Doom 3 technology is a natural fit for the development of Quake 4," explains Tim Willits, id Software's game designer charged with resurrecting one of gaming's most cherished shooters. "The power of the technology has allowed the level designers and artists at Raven to really explore and realise the Strogg universe and characters like never before."

When discussing the X360 hardware, there seems to be a real love affair between id and Microsoft: "The great thing about developing for the Xbox 360 is that it has the raw horsepower needed to run Quake 4 exactly as it has been created." So often

developers in the industry."

If you still don't know the name, perhaps you'll recognise the games. Raven are the folks who, through no small level of benevolence, gave you Star Trek: Elite Force, Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix and ... Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy. As you can see, Quake 4 is their biggest profile game to date. If they pull it off (which they pretty much have) they will enter our circle of trust.

www.ravensoft.com is your first point of call

WWIII MORE LIKE / At points in the game you will leave the corridors and trenches to go head-to-head with the Strogg's main force. It's here that *Quake 4* leaves the *Doom 3* comparisons behind and starts anew with *Call Of Duty*





when developing a title for the PC and console, a developer such as id would be forced to scale down the console version to accommodate the comparably lower system specs. But with *Quake 4*, the development of the PC and Xbox 360 versions are locked tightly together, with no compromises being made whatsoever for our new games machine.

THE EVOLUTION OF QUAKE

The use of technology to create a believable world from a franchise founded on the principle of blowing shit away is where the jump from *Quake II* to 4 will begin to rear its head, so we'll save any tension by divulging a fact early on: there is a point in the game where you get horrifically mutilated and cast into the miserable biomechanical horror of a Strogg. Please imagine the sound of a cathedral organ slamming out some power chords... now. Perfect timing.

This 'transtroggmifacation' is placed amid a story set directly after the events of *Quake II*. This fact will rightly give you the inkling that there must, therefore, be a story. There is, and it's not one that's going for tension. You already know the twist, as does everybody who's heard about the game in any detail. Of course great games don't rely on twists: they rely on having a fluid relationship between you, them, and the worlds they

describe. Quake is the name of the evil god that you heartily ruined at the end of the first game. Quake II took some weapons and the name (because Quake sounds tough, and licensing new names is a nightmare) and threw you into a new story, and situations that made more sense. Quake the god was dead, Quake the sci-fi shooter was born, and gothic cathedrals had been swapped for alien installations. There was now an enemy (Yes, The Strogg – they'd attacked first, apparently) and behind them a leader, the Macron. An explosive plot device left you the only survivor of a crack assault team, and the keys you'd be collecting will do more than open doors. They'd power up doors, and activate terminals and stuff. There was a story, and the great thing stories can do is explain exactly why it was so important to fight your way to a particular button.

The tale of the nameless soldier that ended with the death of the Makron and the destruction of planet Stroggo's defence system starts again in *Quake 4*, with Matthew Kane, an elite member of the Rhino Squad, taking part in another deadly assault on the alien home world. He's a new guy, but the situation is familiar. Kane and his fellow troopers rocket towards the planet in drop ships as a space battle rages on. They get hit by missiles, and go in hard. This time you're not the only survivor: there are marines shouting everywhere, Strogg pouring

QUAKEIN TIME

The original Quake ran quite happily on the sort of PC they now give free to Third World countries pre-loaded with a rather decent version of Solitaire. It was a technical marvel at the time, one that kept the action based more on death than performing tasks. Quake // changed all this and added mission-based gameplay, which meant that instead of kevs you'd have to find... other things. By Quake III, all idea of a strong narrative had been dropped in favour of multiplayer death dealing, no keys, and lots of gibbing. The game's engine was farmed out to other developers. and became the backbone of Raven Software's Soldier Of Fortune II. And now Raven is making Quake 4 under id's close guidance. (We're not making this up! Check the boxout on Raven Software on the opposite page.)



QUAKE / Behold the mighty Quake at the end of the first game. Luckily, pure evil has a problem moving out of its pit



QUAKE II / Started a new story (it actually had one!) and made you work hard for your killing. Plenty of it, mind



QUAKE III / Screw stories, this is Quake III Arena, and it's all about multiplayer matches - in arenas. Quake at its purest, perhaps



QUAKE 4 / It's part Quake II, part Quake
III, and held together with a Doom III binder

VOYEURISTIC TENDENCIES

You like to watch, don't you'r

Quake 4 keeps its multiplayer modes down to basic games of murder. This means that multiplayer options are kept to the classical Deathmatch and Capture The Flag variants, while Tourney mode enables you to take part in a match and then watch how it plays out. This is the first time you'll see Tourney in an official Quake release, as before number 4 it was only available as a mod pack









in on the crash site are giving as good as they're getting. And you? You've got to start this invasion with a pistol.

THE PROMISE OF QUAKE 4

"From the beginning, Quake 4 has been designed to deliver an action-packed, diverse and epic gaming experience," states id's Tim Willits, before excitedly expanding on the aftermath of Kane's chaotic landing and what you, the player, will get to do. "Throughout the course of the game you fight alongside your squad mates, pilot mechanised walkers and hover tanks, and battle through larger outdoor areas as well as in nasty firefights inside incredible portions of the Strogg facilities."

As you can tell, once the action kicks off, that little pistol that served you so well at the crash site will be forgotten in an instant. "The Strogg versus Earth war, which was first introduced in Quake II, is a very rich universe, with great characters, interesting opportunities for plot twists and some of the coolest weapons id has ever created. So, ultimately, we set out to create a non-stop roller-coaster ride of action that at every turn offers a new challenge, a unique gameplay experience, or new insight into this massive war that rages across the Strogg planet."

What separates *Quake II* and 4's openings is that a plot hasn't killed your team to serve the needs of the technology: the X360 and *Doom 3*'s engine are happy bedfellows. Thus, your men are alive – and they are talking to you and each other like characters rather than props. They'll use their newly discovered brains and trigger fingers to tell you where to go and what to do, but they most certainly aren't up for taking orders.

Their presence in the game isn't to drag it more toward Rainbow Six 3 or Republic Commando, as Willits explains: "We never intended Quake 4 to be a tactical squad game. First and foremost, Quake 4 is a first-person action game. The story revolves around you and your experiences with the members of Rhino Squad. Each of the team members has a very unique

personality, and it has been incredibly important to incorporate your relationships with your squad mates, as well as large segments of squad combat, into the game."

But those marauding troopers aren't there to help you. They are there to make you feel as if you're one of many in an assault team. It's a move intended to keep combat as fast as possible, and to create a more intense future war, and it works.

"As players move through the game, we want them to feel like they're part of a larger war and not just a lone gunman, so the interactions and combat with your squad, and the many other characters and squads that you encounter, really deliver the feeling that you're part of a massive operation," says Willits.

Consequently, Quake now feels more like a movie than before, but without relying on ponderous cut-scenes of TV sci-fi

ON GUARD / Quake 4 keeps to the twitchy gameplay ethic that makes both reactions and marksmanship much more important than teamwork. That counts too, mind





storytelling. It's still about you, your guns and how you both You'll play through work your way around a map looking for keys and triggers everything from outdoor - but this time it's war. Sprawling battlefields beautifully lit, scenes, where you pilot a walker mechanised troops stomping their resilient exoskeletons into or hovertank in battles with platoons of squishy flesh - noise, blood and carnage. It'll take more than closing your eyes and imagining to bring you close flying Strogg gunships or massive to the new chaos. It'll take Xbox 360. Strogg Harvesters, to squad missions that take you into the A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES inner recesses of the Strogg bases, or into intense combat

through trenches dug into the

You'll man a turret on the bed of

a truck during a convoy mission,

and even see the inner workings

of the Strogg processing facilities

as you're captured and partially

converted to Strogg in a horrific

transformation sequence. These

that moves you through a vast

is taking place across

the entire planet

range of areas during a war that

aren't individual maps, but a story

surface of the Strogg planet.

Ironically, it's adherence to the story and not the power of the new technology that makes the game look familiar. Evidently The Strogg's architectural style, being so perfectly designed to sustain beings bent on assimilation, hasn't needed to vary that much. Combat will take place in open areas (where vehicles like tanks and walkers can be utilised), as well as across ruins, in rooms and corridors - it all has a familiar feel that's confident in the knowledge that it's merely a backdrop for violence. The Strogg are as subtle as Space Invaders in their motives for being in the game, and so it should come as no surprise that, being basic videogame meanies, they haven't built many beautiful cathedrals or have ever exhibited an unmade bed clattered with condoms.

Halo's Covenant builds towards a religious ideal, but the Strogg just want to kill you - and then go to work on you. They haven't slipped out of a novel. They're very much game constructs. If their home looks prettier it's not because they've taken Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen's severed head and impaled it on the rusted data spike of a robotic engineering droid, but because Doom 3's engine is still state-of-the-art. Seeing Quake 4 on the move is to witness a graphical spectacle that these screenshots fail to convey.

"When it releases," enthuses Willits, "Quake 4 on Xbox 360 will immediately demonstrate the benefits of having a nextgen gaming platform. The real-time lighting and shadowing, bump mapping, vehicle and world physics, scripting and animations systems all work together to create an unbelievably cinematic experience for the player."

With developers making bold claims about how new breakthroughs in game design change how we play, it's heartening to note that, visuals aside, there's no pretence with Quake 4. The single-player game is unashamedly like Quake II - but faster, more intense, and with the squad of Call Of Duty and the ability to use vehicles. The multiplayer mode answers a question you have to ask about a game numbered four in a series that follows on from part two: what happened to Quake III's glory? Well, it's been expanded on in Quake 4.

Quake III was designed as an online experience, and is still regarded as a favourite among the online elite. "It is still widely considered the best pure first-person competition game ever made," attests Willits. It works, and doesn't need fixing, as



HAND ON THE NINE

There are nine weapons available in *Quake 4*, and the mainstays are favourites from *Quake* of old, re-imagined for a new generation of gamers. Among this number are your standard Gauntlet (for smacking people), Shotgun, Grenade and Rocket launchers, Hyper Blaster, Rail Gun, and the Dark Matter Gun. This last beast only comes with a single shot, but that can destroy anything, no matter how much armour it has – even if it's a mechanised walker.

Despite being old tech, these guns can be used in a 21st Century way: we're talking Dual-Wielding. The blaster and machine gun both have flashlights fixed under the barrel (*Doom 3* critics, take note), and used in tandem with a secondary weapon — say, a rail gun — will offer a three-fold advantage. The quick action of the blaster, the power of the rail qun and the light of the torch.

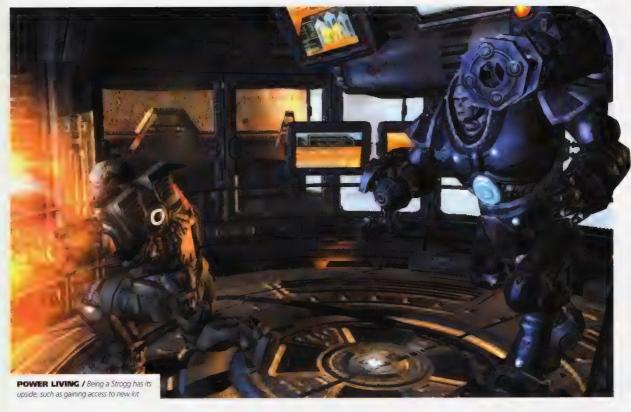
Where *Quake 4* steps up a gear is in the flow of the upgrades. Throughout the game, your Strogg side will enable the weapons you hold to be enhanced by technicians found in the game. These techs will grant you with new mods, and enhanced or alternate firing options depending on the gun and technician — they will vary from the simple, such as a new rate of fire or clip capacity, to the sublime, such as projectiles that home in on targets.

Of course, enhanced old-school weapons wouldn't be enough for a ravenous Quake community used to the best-of-the-best in terms of FPS arsenals. So, id has kindly created a few new weapons for *Quake 4*, including a lightning

gun that emits a massive blast of sustained electricity that can arc from enemy to enemy – is that a combo hit counter we hear coming?



ETCH-A-SKETCH / Back when we were young we'd draw images much like this all over our French exercise books when we got bored of Eddie from Iron Maiden



any areas in need of addressing have been vocalised by the game's legion of fans. Thanks to modding, *Quake* has always enjoyed a two-way relationship between those who make it and those who forgo human relationships to become deadly at it – as well as understand what makes it work. Thousands of the most vocal (and mobile) of this community were among the first to play *Quake 4* at this year's Quakecon in Dallas, Texas. Few games are probed by such numerous and fervent testers, and few games treat the community that makes them so great with as much respect as id.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GAMEPLAY

Multiplayer *Quake 4* is a conflict of speed and destruction on a large scale. The immediacy of the combat, and quickness of death, make it a blisteringly frantic detonation of pure gaming that takes place in claustrophobic installations, as well as across undulating battlescapes.

"We've really been excited to get back to the speed, feel, and style of *Quake III Arena*," reassures Willits, aiming to dampen speculation Xbox Live won't be an integral part of the new bloodbath. "With *Quake 4* multiplayer, we've brought all the action, speed and precision of *Quake III Arena* into the *Quake 4* universe and technology, and created something that again is going to excite not only fans of the *Quake III Arena* style of play, but anyone that wants the excitement of fast-paced, competitive multiplayer gaming."

Adding in controls perfected over time, constant aggression, and particularly "gamey" inclusions like jump pads, gives the game an arcade sensibility, while the graphical power and understanding of how to make mechanised hell on an open field gives a deeper and more operatic feel. It's an old idea running on new technology. It works. This really is gaming at its purest.

Again, Willits is at pains to ensure all *Quake* lovers that, when they load up *Quake 4* on Xbox 360, that old purist's experience will still be there. "At the end of the day, gameplay is what makes the difference in whether or not people want to play your game online, so we're focusing a great deal of effort to make sure that the *Quake 4* multiplayer gameplay is well balanced, accessible, and most importantly fun for the X360 audience."

With that in mind, who better to deliver the perfect Live blast at Xbox 360's launch than the developer responsible for Doom 3 and Return To Castle Wolfenstein... as well as Quake III. Just look at what Willits says Quake 4 should be supporting on Xbox 360 Live: "Matchmaking, communication, friends, Live Aware, downloadable content, and other features are all elements that we're continually evaluating for Quake 4, and how we can best utilise them to make connecting and competing online both easy and fun."

Quake 4 is product. Say that about a film and you're probably criticising *Titanic* or *Star Wars*. Say it about a game and you're probably mocking a title from a global giant that shoves a number on its butt and goes around clucking that it's new because the way you intercept a football is slightly different or that the shotgun takes a quarter of a second less to rack. *Quake 4*'s product status is, however, not a negative one. Indeed, it is on course for being The Best Of Quake.

Games are built on a technology that's constantly evolving, but that doesn't mean that they themselves have to evolve to remain valid. If you want to cut something, you don't need to develop a million megavolt laser: you need a sharp knife. Quake 4 is the sharpening of the existing Quake toolbox. It's about providing the cleanest slices of the most uncluttered of all the first-person shooters currently available. It's built from, as well as on, what has always made Quake stand above the competition, so its similarities should be celebrated in much the same way the gun lover bows in the presence of a new and shiny assault rifle that has a new grip, new bullets and a fancy new scope, but still works on the same principle of expanding gases that have been blowing apart people's heads for years.

If you knew the plot twist to a movie, you'd ruin much of the reason to watch. With a product of this quality, though, the selling points aren't revelations of relationships between evil wizard and hero, for example. The revelation is in the quality of the workmanship that holds the game world together, drives the enemy toward you, and makes stopping him such an ancient pleasure. It's not trying to be a film, or even a new invention. Quake 4 is just quality first-person shooting of the highest order, and the perfect product for the X360 to prove its mettle with. Game on.

POSTAL

Our first letters page, and handily we've swiped some post from our sister mag XBM, so what you're reading are the real concerns of real Xbox owners. From here on in, though it's down to you, so pick up the baton and start running with your X360 queries, for your new console. Or just tell us how awesome we are...

Jana -

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LETTERS

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Feel free to text us with rants, proposals or praise on: 07813 297947

FA)

If you're posh or an angry lawyer looking to complain about review scorry then please fax on: 01202 299955

ABOUT THAT PS3 THING...

L'm writing with concern regarding the Xbox 360's chances against the PS3. I fail to see how it's going to compete against the graphics shown by Sony at E3 because they were, quite frankly, out of this world. Xbox 360 games just look like slightly updated Xbox games.

James Keaton, Devon

Believe if or not, nothing shown at E3 by Sony was actually real. It was all rendered trickery running to an idea; that's impossible for Sony's new hardware to reach, even at the right place the company will probably but the console out at £400 is what we reheard so fail.

HD DILEMMA

☐ I just want to ask one question: am I the only person who's worried about Microsoft keeping on about high-definition TVs all the time? I can't afford to buy a new console and a new TV all at once. Does it really make that much of a difference? And how much am I missing exactly by sticking to my normal TV? If it's too much I might just wait for Nintendo's Revolution, as I heard

somewhere that they aren't making their games for high definition.

Paul Goater, Sunderland

Firstly, that's not one guestion - it's three Secondly, don't worry too much about high-definition. While HD is a marking improvement, offering far more slant, and distal. Xbox 360 games still look major tirent on standard Tv's, early expong current-gen games. On, and don't was thor Revolution. You'll get extremely poined. It's not going to be here until at least 2007.

A YOKEL WRITES

Well done, Microsoft – in your quest to monitor the world and have everyone hooked up to your central brain, you've forgotten one thing – some people, like me, who are unfortunate enough to live in remote parts of the British Isles where tractors and horses are the most common form of transport, don't have broadband and feel quite alienated by the importance being put on Xbox Live.

Don't you think it's perhaps too soon to be treating Xbox Live connectivity with such a large degree of importance when loads of people still can't play it? This is what killed the Dreamcast. With every game supposedly always connected, I'm going to be made to feel inferior, and as though I'm constantly missing out every time I spot yet another greyed-out option in the game menus that further reinforce the notion that Xbox 360 isn't made for yokels like me.

Martin, email

We sympathise Martin, we really do, but keep in mind that as you prepare for another morning milking cows and hosing down pigs, more people than ever are using proadband. In fact, it's now more possilar than dial-up, meaning this is the perfect crimate for Koox Live. Analysis predict that 80 per cent of European households will have broadband by 2010, so it shouldn't be long before you can get it and start playing the wongers of Live too.

RESURRECTING EVIL

☐ First off, I am really excited that the new Resident Evil will be coming out for Xbox 360. It's about time Capcom released good games on the big 'X'. (Well, Dino Crisis 3 was a bit boring — maybe more than a bit). Anyways, I think Capcom should release more Resident Evil games on Xbox 360: if Resident Evil 4 can move from GameCube to PlayStation2, then why not X360? In fact, I think Capcom should remake Resident Evil 2 and 3 for X360 (just like they did to the original PSone classic for GameCube).

Suneil Barkat, email



CAN'T BELIEVE

people are taken in by Sony's hype and lies. I remember when the PS2 was being hyped and Sony said

the CPU of the machine could display emotion, naming it the Emotion Engine in the process. This turned out to be an over-exaggeration of the machine's power and, as such, makes me extremely suspicious of what the PS3 will actually be capable of compared to the fake videos and screenshots released from E3.

Sony is also focusing too much on hardware. Sony keeps on about the graphical capabilities, but Microsoft has developed an amazing operating system that has made Xbox Live even better and is providing tools and middleware for programmers.

Sony is once again letting developers get on with it, even though the system is really hard to develop for. **Colin Morris, Leeds**

The developers we've recently spoken to all say there's very little difference between the you're right to be suspicious of Sony – the company's PS3 graphics chip wasn't even finished at the time of those E3 demos. Further to this, Microsoft's commitment to software will be the defining difference between the two systems. Fundamentally, software can be upgraded through patches over the next eight years, enabling X360 to develop with the market, while the PS3's chip

will remain the same.

two consoles, with both being

very capable machines. However,

FIGHT THE POWER

☐ Dude, what's going on with Halo 3? Why do us loyal 'box owners have to wait for Sony to pull its finger out and release the PS3 before we can play Halo 3? C'mon Microsoft, aren't we worth some Halo 3 magic? Forget Sony, they don't know shit.

Matt, email

'Oh, you've done it now, sunshine. Halo 3? Halo bloody 3 – what's wrong with Halo 2?. True, Xbox owners are more than happy to spend days installed in Xbox Live playing Bungie's last classic. Arsehole. You, sir, are going straight to hell - and my boot up your whiny pale anus is going to drive you there.

THE SPOT "Don't anger him

Remember, everybody – we want your reasoned, sensible letters on gaming, and not letters like the one to the left. Here're a few other topics we don't want to have to read about: the likelihood of Microsoft buying Nintendo; which is best out of PS3 or Xbox 360; the probability of us sending you free games. And no, we don't want to cyber - but thanks for asking.

140.61

BOOM I

JETTES P

FRENCS LIST?

DERN







HOLLI TTUCH WILL X360 COST?

FULRAT DERD OR RUNE SO ITWOH.

THE SPLIS PRE TTUCH PRETTER

WILLIAM TO THE

WHAT SAITES DO YOU PURY OR

WALL I HAVE TO PUT R PICTURE OF

ITYSELF ON LINE 360? ITTI NOT

VERY 6000 LOOKING

TITTL ITTRICHESTER

LIME? CRO I ROD YOU TO MY

THAN MY GRUFREND

We're more than happy Resident Evil 5 will be coming to Xbox 360, even if we are going to have to wait well over a year. But do we really want a slew of old games remade? Let's just be happy that Capcoin has finally seen sense and will be publishing its biggest franchises on Xhox

A BACKWARDS REQUEST

■ I need you to put the record straight. is the X360 going to be fully backwards compatible with Xbox games? The reason I ask is that on page four of your X360 pull-out magazine [given away free with sister mag XBMI you state that the X360 will be backwards compatible, but in the August 2005 issue of Personal Computer World, on page 40 they rabbit on in a paragraph on the X360 that (I quote): "it will be backwards compatible with some 'topselling' Xbox games, which will be rereleased on a demand-driven basis."

Now I know that you wouldn't print anything without being aware of your facts, and do believe that PCW are reporting on old rumour-based information, but please do me the justice of putting my mind at rest and confirm what you have printed. Then please advise the rest of the games media world to print the true facts, as they are undermining the X360's credentials already by getting things half-right. I believe that quite a few Xbox owners may base their decision on buying an X360 on whether their current software selection will play on it or not, irrespective of the fact that there will be a lot of titles out for it at launch. So for these so-called highbrow publications to report on things halfcock is not on.

Also, all the whingers going on about the name of the Xbox 360: I couldn't care less what it's called, as long as the games kick arse and Xbox Live has no time-lag.

Meticulous, email

BURNING

This month, the hot topic on the Totalgames.net forum has been the Xbox 360's price

"Just toddled over to simplygames and saw that they have listed the X360 at £399.99! Even though this is an estimate, I still think that it will be around that point."

"360 will flop hard at that price."

"You may as well just buy a budget PC and buy PC games."

"Aw my god! £400? That's pap! £250 max I say (or at least I hope)"

BREAKDOWN

Xbox 360 rules

Nintendo will win

can't afford HD TV

■I can't get Xbox Live

Can I play you at

Can I have a free

■When will Halo 3

People's hopes, dreams and fears...

MAILBAG

PS3 sucks

be out?

Pro Evo

Xbox 360?

The Abox 360 packwards compatibility is based on emulation, and therefore Microsoft cannot quarantee that all games will work initially. When the machine launches, the most popular games will work and Microsoft will add further compatibility over time. So, the totality of the statement was, in fact, true, although it now appears that only the best-selling. Xbox games will actually work. Seriously though, do you really want to play Miamic Vice on your spanking new Xbox 360? Wouldn't you sather play something like Project Gotham Bacer 37

RANT

 ☐ You know, if Sony and Microsoft stopped hurling insults at each other and worked more on their new consoles, we would have them by now.

Christopher McGrillen, Co. Donegal

FANBOY OF THE MONTH

DOING MARIO PROUD

So you're releasing a new Xbox 360 mag. are you? Well, you might as well not bother, because as soon as Nintendo comes out with the Revolution your precious X360 is going

designer in the business. Nintendo has Marie the best games character ever. Nintendo will have the best joypad, as they always make the best and most innovative joypads You hear that Microsoft innovative It's the word you don't understand and you will die

but you're also forgetting about Xbox 360's head start, its Xbox Live service, its superior games line-up and the fact that

HAHARR XBOX IS DERO IN JAPAN RNO X360 LUTUL LOSE!!!

I WANT TO RED YOU TO ITTY FREGOS LIST! DERA

DOES THE 360 HRVE THREE OR FOUR CORES? WHAT IS A CORE?

WILL THE XBOX BE RVRLABLE IN BLACK? I THINK BLACK LOOKS CLEER. ROOM

WARNING: RAVING

m die

Nintendo has Miyamoto - the best Miles, Bournemouth

Not only are your points irrelevant, the Revolution doesn't exist (yet)

NETWORK

360 We look at news in many different ways. Here's how... **FEATURE**

Extended news reports

THE HACK

Whispers and tasty gossip

HOT SEAT

Mark Rein Questioned IN THE SPIN

Inside Ghost Recon 3...

OPINION

lain Lee and John Tynes

XBOX3600NLY £209.3600NLY

Microsoft delivers next-gen gaming for all

fter keeping gamers guessing for months, Microsoft finally revealed how much we'll all be paying for next-generation gaming. The Xbox 360 will be released in two packages – one appealing to affluent hardcore gamers with a strong desire for media convergence and online gaming (that's us, then), the other geared towards cost-conscious gamers that either plan to upgrade their system gradually, or who want to start playing next-gen games and don't care about having frivolous extras.

The cut-down package, labelled the 'Xbox 360 Core System', carries an RRP of just £209.99 and consists of the Xbox 360 console, one wired controller, an Ethernet cable and a standard composite TV connection. This includes out-of-the box Xbox Live Silver service, so long as the user also buys a memory card in which to store their account details. This compares well with the upcoming PS3, where Sony is threatening a reassuringly expensive price tag — it has claimed you will joyfully work longer hours to be able to afford their next offering.

The full X360 package has an RRP of £279.99, and comes bundled with one wireless controller, a 20Gb hard drive, an Xbox Live headset, HD component cables (plus



MAPPY CHAPPIES / Microsoft's Chris Lewis with Martin Bachmayer (left) and Stephan Brechtmann (right) at the announcement of Xbox 360's price







OU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Two packages and a host of accessories means the Xbox 360 promises something for everyone.



Oddly, Ian seems to be worrying more about backwards compatibility than anything else, so he's going for the full pack (£279.99), as it contains

the hard drive that makes backwards compatibility possible. Usefully for Ian, who owns an HD TV, the full pack also has the HD component cables in the box, meaning he doesn't need to buy an extra lead. Ian is also keen on playing online, so will be going for an Xbox Live Gold (£39.99) subscription. Lastly, due to his home entertainment centre being mostly silver, Ian wants a matching ·£334,97

faceplate (£14.99) so his X360 won't look out



JAY
Being the geek of the group Jay wants to do everything with his X360. He wants to play on Live and video chat with his equally geeky mates, he

•£397.96

wants to stream movies and music from his PC and he wants to connect his X360 to his home wireless network. He also plans to hide his pomography on his Xbox 360 hard drive where his girlfriend won't think to look. In addition to the full pack (£279.99), he needs an Xbox Live Gold subscription (likely to cost £39.99) and a wireless networking adaptor (£59.99)/ He doesn't have an

HDTV yet, so an RGB scart lead (£17.99) is an essential addition.



Ryan wants everything and he's going to be very poor this Christmas because of it. If you're a member of Ryan's family, don't expect any presents

this year — he's spending all he has on himself. He wants the full pack (£279.99) and because he shares a flat needs two extra wireless controllers (£65.98) to make the most of his live-in opponents. He also wants Xbox Live Gold (probably £39.99), a wireless network adaptor (£59.99) and an RGB scart cable (£17.99). In addition he would like a faceplate (£14.99) as he feels it will allow him

to "stand out as an individual" in his house of men. Greedy.

· £478.93



a scart adaptor for standard definition output), and for a limited period pre-Christmas, the Xbox 360 media remote. An Ethernet cable for instant connection to Xbox Live Silver is also supplied, and thanks to the inclusion of a hard drive, a memory card isn't required to store account details.

Despite sighs of relief from UK journalists, the US attendees were less jubilant. Expecting a price point of around \$300 for the full pack thanks to a previous price suggestion from Xbox figurehead J Allard, US press were quite taken aback to learn that the premium pack will retail in the US for \$399.99.

the UK, leading to the price quickly being dropped and 'free' games being offered to early adopters who had been stung for the full cost.

Other concerns are being levelled at the decision to sell the console without a hard drive. With a large portion of gamers lacking the hard drive, it will be impossible for developers to use it effectively in their games.

In reality, very few games for the first Xbox used the hard drive in any dramatic way, and according to some developers, the large amount of RAM (512Mb) inside the X360 is an adequate substitute. "Developers already got our big Xbox 360 gift - we got 512Mb of RAM," says Mark Rein, vice president of Epic Games. "That was a huge win for developers and customers alike and there was no way we were going to get that and a hard drive on every machine. The RAM is more important and will make a bigger difference than the hard drive."



(EIII

Being a busy news editor, Keith doesn't have time to exchange pleasantries with petulant American youths and is therefore not interested in playing

Xbox Live. He is also without a PC at home, and lacks any desire to stream music to his X360. Add in the fact he's quite thrifty and it's easy to work out he's going to be buying the Xbox 360 Core package (£209.99). He does have an HD TV, though (it was probably free), so will be forced to shell out extra for component cables (£19.99) that aren't included in his cheapo Core pack.

The only other thing he needs is a memory card (£22.99) to store game saves. Sorted.

• £252.97

Rein is also keen to point out that the decision is not entirely an unexpected one and therefore, it should have no detrimental effect to anyone's development for the console itself. "Developers were always told not to expect a hard drive on every machine, which means that nobody has developed with the assumption that it will be there," he assures.

Backwards compatibility for the previous generation of console was seen as a major factor in the success of the PS2, though, so there is a bit of a gamble here as the hard drive will be required for original Xbox games to play on the X360. Core bundle purchasers won't have this feature, and so would have to shell out more. In addition, it may also prove difficult to push the Xbox 360's extensive multimedia features to an audience that has chosen to embrace the console purely as a gaming device. We'll have to wait and see .



HOW MUCH? / When the price was announced, many UK gamers at the show couldn't believe their ears – Microsoft had passed up the opportunity to rip us off!

ALL I CAN SAY TO YOU IS THAT WHICH WE'VE SEEN, AND THAT WHICH IS STILL TO COME IS INCREDIBLE



QUOTE UNQUOTE / CHRIS LEWIS

Following Microsoft's press conference, we took Chris Lewis, European vice president of Home and Entertainment Division EMEA, to one side to talk exclusively about Xbox 360

X360: WHY ARE YOU OFFERING TWO DIFFERENT PACKAGES?

LEWIS: It's about offering choice and flexibility. People want scalability and to be able to customise. People want to do different things with the console at different speeds in terms of the way they want to build that experience: The reaction from the publishers and the retailers and the consumers in one that totally reinforces that. They just love the fact that it scales and for those people that want to jump straight in to the full integrated experience that is the Xbox 360 system; but for those that just want to jump into playing high-definition games, etc. they have the opportunity to do that straight away with the Xbox 360 core.

X360: ARE THE PUBLISHERS WORRIED ABOUT A SPLIT IN THE XBOX 360 MARKET?

LEWIS: We work very closely with the publishers. They've known for some time what our plans are and limet with a number of them again and they're all very comfortable and very enthusiastic about what we're doing, and in terms of them writing games to it—they're not the least bit concerned and they love the choices. The mere fact we're about to offer a choice is going to give us a greater adoption and a faster acceleration of the platform.

X360: WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH BACKWARDS COMPATIBILITY?

LEWIS: The machine will be backwards compatible. The most popular games will be compatible.

X360: DOES THAT MEAN NOT

LEWIS: It's about emulation as I'm sure you're aware; we'll continue to work on that compatibility consistently, but we will make sure that the key titles will be backwards compatible.

X360: SO YOU NEED A HARD DRIVE FOR BACKWARDS COMPATIBILITY? (C LEWIS: Yes, absolutely.

X360: BUT CUSTOMERS CAN BUY THE HARD DRIVE LATER IF

LEVVIS: The hard drive will be available in retail as an accessory, as indeed will all of the accessories that will allow the consumer to scale and build their Xbox 360 Certainly there will be the ability to scale and buy some or all of the elements that go to make up the Xbox 360 system. But you can do it at your own speed. You may want to get straight in: to high-definition: gaming, you might just want to play games you might want to play music through your Xbox 360 system, but you may not immediately know whether you wantto expand that experience. And that's what's fantastic about the X360

X360: HOW WILL RETAIL HANDLE THIS? WON'T IT LEAD TO BLOATED, COSTLY BUNDLES?

particularly in Europe will be looking to do what they're good at and come up with their own unique proposition that makes sense for their customers in terms of what they're specifically likely to do, I'm not certain. I will tell you that they're excited about the accessories market—it's an important one for them as it gives them the ability to customise their offerings to their customers; that is the specialists and the mass market audiences

X360: WILL RETAILERS STICK TO YOUR RECOMMENDED PRICES?

Lawis: The retailers determine the price that the consumers pay. [At the press conference] we talked about the fact that these are estimated retail prices. In terms of the way retailers choose to go to market: that's their decision. If I think back to existing platforms, consistently the price does get established and people stay reasonably close to that. With retailers though, there are companies that will package a bundle and add various things to create a unique proposition on the high street. I'm very comfortable that will work well.

trying to do a establish the price poin in the market and establish the all important choice aspect

X360: LOOKING AT THE HARD DRIVE, WILL 20GB BE ENOUGH? LEWIS: At the moment 20Gb is the right-level of storage. However, we're flexible, if there is a need to scale that then I'm sure you'll see that happen

X360: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SILVER AND GOLD XBOX LIVE MEMBERSHIPS?

hat comes with Xbox 360 gives you access to the voice and text messaging (as well as) access to the Xbox uve Marketplace where you can start to trade with other people and work with other people to design skins or driving suits for racing games, etc. The Gold level gives you immediate access to the multiplayer online gameplay. You have access to online tournaments

X360: SO YOU NEED GOLD TO PLAY ONLINE GAMES?

LEWIS: You do for multiplayer, yes

X360: SOME DEVELOPERS HAVE SAID THAT DVDS AREN'T LARGE ENOUGH FOR THEIR GAMES, DOES THIS WORRY YOU?

they were at capacity. In terms of needing more space, we would need to act accordingly, but that's the first time

X360: WHAT DOES XBOX 360 GAMING OFFER THE GAMER?

the huge step in terms of the gaming experience that's offered with Xbox 360 very compelling, very immersive; think the gamelay will be a lot deeper and broader. All I can say to you is this which we've seen, and that which is still to come is incredible. We're very confident we will have the right line-up of first-party, third-party, exclusive and cross-platform games.

INTERVIEW

The brain behind epic RPG *Sudeki* from Climax ponders all things Xbox 360

JASON AVENT

GAME DIRECTOR, CLIMAX



X360: WHY
IS MICROSOFT
SO SURE IT
CAN PLACE A
CONSOLE AT
THE HEART OF
THE HOME?
AVENT:
Microsoft has as

direct experience, with this than anyone else. Xbox 360 will be much more particulable than anything we've seen before. It can be tarned to more purposes than other ansoles because its got a continued perating system. Accessibility is key when you're trying to get people 10 100 new, features and thereby generate new markets.

AVENT: HOW WILL MICROSOFT'S PUSH FOR CONNECTIVITY CHANGE THE WAY YOU MAKE GAMES?

AVENT: User-conted content will be shared between gamen. People will help line another susside of the game more, in well as inside, and we'll rused to make up perfort to drive community with clans and bersistent online player people as and world

AVENT: DO YOU THINK ONLINE GAMING WILL BE AT THE HEART OF THE NEXT-GEN CONSOLES?

AVENT: I'm sure that games will still be released with little... on online play and still to successful. I'm not convinced that we'll see online-only console games yet, either

X360: CAN WE EXPECT DEEPER GAMING EXPERIENCES, OR JUST PRETTIER GAMES, FROM XBOX 360?

AVENT: To begin with we'll just see parter with more of everything in them. More doesn't necessarily mean better, though. Finally, when they are comfortable with the new hardware developer will begin to innovate

X360: HOW DO YOU FORSEE GAMING EVOLVING IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

AVENT: Online will definitely become more important. We might see some unsuccessful; uninspired ports at first, but when someone finds the magic recipe for making a console-centric Massively Multiplayer Online Game, our fusiones will have be the some again, soles believe that the truly open the media up to a wider audience

SEGA MECH'S OUR DAY

A NEW LEASH OF LIFE

Sega panders to old-school gamers with Chrome Hounds

t was becoming a close-run thing: the Xbox 360 was almost the first console not to feature a mech game. Luckily, to save tradition, Sega has stepped in with the From Software developed *Chrome Hounds*. This is the latest tactical robo sim from the developer behind *Armored Core*, and as such comes with all the punch that a mech heavyweight developer can deliver.

Rather than set you alone against an army of walking tanks, *Chrome Hounds* puts you into squads of six mechs. Each will have unique abilities and custom options that will enable you to build a balanced team from scratch.

A detailed finance system will be in place, to ensure creating the best mech is a goal that needs to be worked for, as producer Klayton Vorlick explains: " You earn money for completing missions,

and can spend the money you earn in between missions to buy upgrade parts."

The physics engine powering *Chrome Hounds* will demand that a bit of thought goes into each mech design. If you load a walker with a hefty 50ft cannon on its left side, you'll need to counteract the balance on the right. Put tracks on a misaligned mech and the only place you'll be going in round in circles. As for game modes, *Chrome Hounds* will be a Live must-buy as, along with the offline story, a twelve-player team skirmish mode will get the oil flowing, while a mission based squad mode will require more skill.

It's been a while since a decent mech game made the headlines, so we hope Sega can polish this one up ready for launch. Grab a copy of **X360** next month to find out more.





HEAVY METAL / With any luck this mech shooter should have some bite to add to its very impressive graphics



DOUBLE VALUE

Perfect package

MICROSOFT TEASED us with

details of the *Perfect*Dark Zero Collector's

Edition this month:
The two-disc set
will include a
bundle of freebies
and collectables
that delve deeper

into Joanna Dark's world of futuristic espionage. As well as the full game of Rare's long-awaited next-gen FPS, you will also get a disc packed with unusual media. This will include the art of

Perfect Dark Zero
featurette, the
Kepi & Kat music
track from the
game, Gamer Tiles
to customise your
identity on Xbox
Live, the PDZ HUD to
customise your X360
dashboard and the

first chapter of the *PDZ* novel, *Initial Vector*. The package will also come with

a PDZ Glyph Card as well as a special edition comic, Hong Kong Sunrise:

To find out more about *Perfect Dark Zero*, skip over to our exclusive preview interview on **page 80**

THE HACK

GAMBON

Clash of the Titans: Games of a similar ilk come together to fight it out...

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006 VS. LMA MANAGER 2006

Two of gaming's biggest football manager franchises go head-to-head

arch 2006 will see two classic franchises going toe-to-toe on Xbox 360 LMA is a stalwart of console scene while Football Manager i, the best - PC gamer could want. From the revealed features it would seem that LMA is remaining close to its console roots affering friendly, quick gameplay, while Football Manager will be a straight port of

and sophistication
We're promised new menus and
stats, plus new commentary to liven the matches further, and specific garner form and stats screens to get under the skin of a player. You'll even be able to berate the team at full time, as well as half-time, to affect players' performances -- something Sven could definitely do with.

New features aside, the promise is that Football Manager on Xbox 360 will take full advantage of the console's power, using the High Definition mode to display more info on screen, and even utilising a new split-screen option.

Though FM is certainly shaping into a serious next-gen sim, LMA's improvements shouldn't be overlooked. We know the commitment to delivering an easy playing



experience will remain, but an improved interface, a new database engine that will allow for complex transfer negotiations and a detailed 3D match mode will be some of the features planned to utilise the X360's power. There will also be the added value of playing full 20 seasons watching young hotshots come through the leadlines and retire

disgracefully to the third division all the highs and lows of the real game are here. Also, in something escalating into war of promises. Codemasters has some back at Segas claims of pushing the X360s power, by stating LMA 2006 will feature normal mapping and enhanced lighting effects on the players and stadiums in the 3D matches and post-game match reports.

It could be argued that, from initial promises, LMA 2006 and FM 2006 are matching each other shot for shot. The winner could depend on a preference for IN A SUDDEN DEATH FACE-OFF BOTH ARE LOOKING

LMA's console ease or Football Manager's PC heritage or it could depend on each game's Live options.

Just like a sudden death extra time.

Just like a sudden death extra time. face-off, both we looking to Live to make the difference it's here at Codemasters could slip up, as LMA is ally promising transfer downloads and lamer points, earned from tallying wins and awards.

Over in Football Manager for one final attack on goal, and its a beauty. Sports interactive is throwing itself in dlong into Live, with a Versus mode that will test player's factics. They shoot! They score!

player's tactics. They shoot! They score!

DOTBALL MANAGER 2006

- Negotiate wages and contracts
- Motivate players with ream talks
- Manage players at a personal level
- hack roon staff commands
- Revamped factics screens
- New player stats and form screens
- Detailed High Definition menus
- Xbox Live features, including versus challenges and downloads

VERDICI

Football Manager has the depth and legacy to take Xbox 360 to the top

LHA HANAGER JUOG

- Improved database engine
- New transfer system will offer more
- Normal mapped 3D match engine
- Intuitive pad hased controls
- Over 1:000 teams to manage
- More than 20 consecutive seasons
- a Plavei database downloads via liive
- n-depth post-match reports
- Detailed High Definition displays

VERDICT

LMA could struggle to win over Football Manager's installed fanbase

PS2 DEVELOPER JUMPS SHIP

Dehind Drakengard and Drakengard 2 on PlayStation2, has revealed to Japanese magazine Famitsu Xbox that it has begun work on several fantasy games primarily for Xbox 360. Apparently, next-gen console conversions will not be far behind either.



MICROSOFT HACKED OFF

Microsoft is hoping to shake off the Xbox's image as a hacker's heaven by building security directly into the hardware of the X360. "We've taken security to the hardware level and built it from the ground up," says Chris Satchell from the Xbox Advanced Technology Group. "There are going to be levels of security in this box that the hacker community has never seen before.

That would be a public challenge to the world's modders, then.



An MMORPG developed W Microsoft

SPLINTER CELL 4....

Coming in early 2006, apparently

HI-REZ STUDIOS...

Eicense Unreal-Engine 3 for new MMORPG

UNREAL ENGINE 4

OBLIVION

JUST £210 FOR ALL THAT POWER? THAT'S EXCELLENT VALUE – IT'S ONLY £30 MORE THAN A PSP!

THE HOT SEAT / MARK REIN, EPIC GAMES

With so many Xbox 360 games using Epic's Unreal Engine 3 technology, we raid the studio for the inside story

ithout a doubt, Epic Games is one of the most exciting creative talents in the videogames industry right now. The developer has come a long way since vice president Mark Rein cofounded the company back in 1991, having established its *Unreal* series of games as one of the key first-person franchises around today. However, despite a past littered with successes, it's the future that now holds the most in store for the developer.

"Some of the other games on the format look good, but there's nothing as good as *UT 2007*," Mark Rein proudly boasts, deservedly pleased with the progress of his upcoming PC shooter *Unreal 2007* and the amazing Unreal Engine 3 powering it.

While Unreal 2007 is yet to be 'officially' confirmed for Xbox 360 (we're expecting confirmation any day now), Epic is fully committed to the platform, with the benefits of its Unreal Engine 3 already being put to great use with the company's first Xbox 360 title, Gears of War. Indeed, the quality of Epic's Unreal Engine 3 has the industry so excited, more companies are licensing the engine for their own next-gen games.

"The main advantage you get with Unreal Engine 3 is the extremely high level of productivity for content



BIOG

NAME / Maik Rem
COMPANY/ Epic Games
JOB TITLE / Mig
President and Co-Founded
CURRENTLY
WORKING ON / Geans
of War, Unreal 2007
DID YOU KNOW? /
Epic is already developing
the Ulereal Engine 4

development," Rein explains, citing the ever-increasing costs associated with videogame development. "You listen to developers talking about next-gen games and saying how difficult it's going to be to create content, and it's true... creating content and building believable lighting and environments is much more complex. Plus, content isn't just about artwork: it's about scripting and using that CPU horsepower to make worlds believable." According to Rein, Unreal Engine 3 is the perfect solution: "It really helps to control costs and makes this generation of games not five or ten times as much [to make] as everyone's been saying, but only a jump of around 30-40 per cent in cost over previous generations."

Developers are able to get great results for a fraction of the headaches and development costs – it's little wonder the engine is being used to power many Xbox 360 games.

And what of the Xbox 360 itself? Rein is keen on the platform, enthusing about its power, ease of development and extra features, but the price impresses him the most: "Just £210 for all that power? That's excellent value — it's only £30 more than a PSP!"

Check out Gears Of War... P90



Rare treat Kameo's taken forever to get here, but it's looking worth the wait...

It's been passed about more times than a baby at a baptism, but somehow Rare's Kameo Elements Of Power will finally be launched this November with the Xbox 360. Originally a GameCube platformer

it was then earmarked as an Xbox adventure Now an X360 fantasy epic, Karneo would be forgiven if it turned out to be a bit confused. Karneo features platforming, free-roaming adventure, RPG development, and if

also has the look — exotic lighting, vast environments and more enemies on screen than Man United has fans.

"All the models in the game now use complex shaders to mimic real materials; this is basically similar to the techniques used to render computer graphics for films," says Mark Stevenson, the Lead Artist on Kameo

Parallax mapping is also included, offering a feeling of 3D without the memory sapping textures of bump mapping, plus screen effects to mimic how bright light flares on film, heat haze and depth of vision

Expect a hands-on play test of *Kameo* in next-month's **X360** as we build up to the game's November launch







Print

ROCKY RIDE

>>> French developer Asobo Studios has thrown its hat into the ring with the rally game Grand Raid Off Road. Despite the strange name, the game is shaping into a traditional racer set in a freeroaming environment.



TIME TO BUY

DA report in the Seattle Times speculates that Microsoft is planning to open a dedicated Xbox 360 store in Times Square to promote and sell the new super console at launch. A second boutique is rumoured to be planned for Tokyo.



PAY TV ON X360

Death As we went to press, details were emerging of a deal between Microsoft and Nagrovision to deliver Pay TV (securely encrypted programmes) to the X360 via Windows Media Center PCs. Full details of this new media feature next month.

XBOX 360 KEYBOARD

Despite refusing to develop a keyboard for the original Xbox, so as to distance it from its PC heritage, a recent presentation in Spain revealed the existence of a first-party QWERTY keyboard for the X360, similar to those found on Blackberry handheld devices. The keypad will slot into the bottom of the controller, allowing gamers to send text messages and chat during Live play.



Rare has been in hibernation on Xbox since Microsoft paid a fortune for the studio, but the fans don't care. We posed Xbox owners some questions.

WHICH IS WORTH THE WAIT?













www.xbox360magazine/forum to vote on next month's big burning issue question: Is the hard drive important?

ave I got some juice for you. Sega has been topping the conversation down the Dog and Whistle with rumours rife of a next-gen version of Shenmue getting people worked up. Basically, despite all of the stories to the contrary, your old pal Yu Suzuki isn't working on a new Shenmue. He is in fact hard at work in Sega's arcade department, hammering away on new next-gen coin-ops. As witnessed when he recently reared his head with footage of next-gen arcade versions of Afterburner and Virtua Fighter (read more about this on page 29 - Ed). On a related matter, a quick nip over to the patents' office and I discovered Sega has bought the name OutRun: Coast To Coast. Does this mean a new racer is scheduled for release next year?

Once the furore over Sega's offerings dimmed, the mood turned to something Capcom producer Kenji Inafune let slip at the recent Tokyo Xbox Summit. When asked what he was working on besides Dead Rising, Kenji stated he was busy developing a game based on a franchise 'older fans would remember him best for'. What could this be? The other big franchise connected to Inafune, Resident Evil 5, was already on the cards. So what could this secret project be? A trawl through the files shows Kenji as creator of Megaman, so does this really mean there's an Xbox 360 version of Megaman in the works? I'll dig a little deeper into this and get back to you with the full scoop soon.

Well, with the hardcore gamers sated, I'll just leave you with one final tasty morsel: EA's launch line-up. The big gossip circulating outside the gents was that FIFA 2006 won't see the light of day on Xbox 360. There, that's stunned you into silence. But it's not as bad as it seems - in fact, it's better, as the American games giant is toying with the idea of ditching an Xbox port for a stand alone Xbox 360 FIFA. If this is true, then



HE HACK

X360'S BAR FLY HUNTS OUT HOT NEWS

Trawling the gaming gutters for salacious gossip and rumour...

we would get a next-gen FIFA proper, no Xbox upgrade. Best of all, this new tidy little number will go under the name FIFA: Road To The World Cup. That's right, we can expect a World Cup special edition that FIFA designed specifically for the Xbox 360 as early as this November. Things are looking even better for EA, too, as news that PGR 3 may slip to December means NFS Most Wanted will be the only X360 racer at launch. On that bombshell, I'll sign off for this month. Your pal, The Hack.

DEVELOPERS GET DIRTY

America's talent queue up to work on X360



THE FUTURE looks brighter by the day, as industry big shot Foundation 9 (home of The Collective, Pipeworks and Backbone) threw its weight behind Xbox 360. In the past the group has developed

games for all the major publishers including Activision EA and Vivendi Universal, and is considered the third largest development group in America The group has around 30 games

currently in development for Xbox 360. The first release from the group will be next year's action game based on the Dirty Harry films, starring Clint Eastwood, More on this next issue



Print

BLUE JAM

>>> EA and Def Jam Enterprises have a new contract that allows EA to create multi-platform games. The first game will be *Def Jam 3*, and will continue the beat-'em-up series' knack for delivering glossy multi-discipline combat. The X360 version will be released first, and action movie production values are promised.



IN CONTROL

Microsoft is asking third-party peripheral manufacturers to sign binding royalty licences, so only sanctioned companies can release pads, light-guns, dance mats and steering wheels for the Xbox 360. Does this spell the end for cheap unofficial pads?



DO YOU GET THE MESSAGE?

The new Perfect
Dark Zero website has opened, and some titbits of info are leaking out for gamers wanting to break the site's codes... head to www.perfectdark.com



MADNESS?

» Artificial Studio's Monster Madness is aming to deliver oldfashioned gaming with four-player Live arcade action reminscent of old coin-op Gauntlet.



NETWORK

RUMOUR MILL Cutting through the internet gossip and

whispers of Master Chief's return to bring you the real news... Trust us, we're professionals!

YOU SAY

There will be an online Co-operative component for the campaign supporting mere than two players at once.

WE SAY:

It's an interesting concept from a multiplayer perspective, but ultimately pointless. How many people played through the Co-op campaign in the previous games? Also, even if you do manage to get four bullet-spitting buddies together, it will only be a matter of time before the urge to shoot your mates overpowers your desire to help them.

YOU SAY

two-bit action Jackson like The

Rock or Vin Diesel turning up to

The game will contain a multiplayer mode. which pits players against bots in Scenarios that are directly connected to the Story

RUMOUR RATING: * * *

WE SAY:

A pretty easy one to deliver, and we relish the opportunity to annihilate more whiny Grunts in any

The opening sequence will be timeline of the original.

WE SAY: Please, please, please say it isn't so. The last thing we need is some

context, be it connected to the story or not. RUMOUR RATING: * * * *

very cinematic and take place thousands of years before the

Halo 3 will have a darker,

RUMOUR RATING: * * *

grittier stortine Han

previous instalments.

WE SAY:

YOU SAY

spoil the party. RUMOUR RATING:

It will feature voice acting from the stars of the upcoming movie.

Zanzibar Sidevinder and Hang Entligh are said to return to the multiplayer mode Completely revorted Zanzibar will be mangled and torn apart after the barrle and the Sty will be dore red Sidevinder will have four legs instead of just two with boses at each end Hang En High will have a massive tree at its centre and the structure will be Leteriorating

WE SAY:

Of course it's going to be cinematic - it's set to be a stunning new chapter in one of the greatest game franchises ever created. As for the new timeline, if it's set thousands of years before the original story we'd be missing a little guy called Master Chief. We think not.

RUMOUR RATING: * *

A new map and movie editor will be created by a dedicated team and will be provided separately from the game These utilities will apparently work seamessly with Xbox Live

players online. WE SAY: The thought of up to 50 players duking

Halo 3 will support 50

RUMOUR

it out over Xbox Live is a mind-blowing prospect. Games like Black Hawk Down are already proving that it is achievable, so we reckon this is a dead cert, but will there be 50 Master Chiefs on offer or just the one? What's that? Six of us, 50 of you.

RUMOUR RATING: * *

YOU SAY:

What's with the need to make every game dark and gritty all of a sudden? Hald's tone has always been fairly sinister, and just how do they intend to make it more 'gritty'? Perhaps Master Chief will remove his

helmet to reveal a head of long unkempt hair and designer stubble. He'll forgo Dual-Wielding and opt for

stealth kills instead – there'll be blood and gore aplenty. SlipKnot are said to be providing the soundtrack.

CORTANA TURNS OUT TO BE MASTER

CHIEFTS

MOTHER

WE SAY:

Hmm, maybe, picture the scene. Cortana: If you only knew the power of Halo. Dr Halsey never told you what happened to

Master Chief: He told me enough! He told me you killed her.

Cortana: No. I am your mother. Master Chief: No, no. That's impossible! Cortana: You know it to be true. Master Chief: No, nooooooooo!

Cortana: Son, you can destroy the Covenant. It is your destiny. Join me, it is the only way.

RUMOUR RATING: *

WE SAY:

When Halo 3 makes it to Xbox 360, we're hoping that it will contain a planet-load of NEW environments for us to explore. While we look forward to the prospect of returning to much-travelled maps, let's hope we see some innovation first.

RUMOUR RATING: * * *



WE SAY:

D---

At last we can make that long-awaited movie about the blue team versus the red team - we won't spoil the ending, but needless to say someone ends up getting punished. Seriously, though, we think it's likely that some form of map editor or moviemaker has a good chance of making it into the final game, as maps and movies would be a great addition to the Live Marketplace.

RUMOUR RATING: * * * *



Next-Gen titles heading for Xbox 360?

t the recent JAMMA show in Japan, the arcade aficionados over at Sega finally flicked the switch on the Xbox 360 hype machine by revealing fresh details on its next-gen arcade titles. The list of games announced included a host of usual suspects,

such as Virtua Tennis, Afterburner and Virtua Fighter 5, and though some of these game trailers were shown at E3 a few months back, this was the first time the public could get in on the action.

Though we're obviously very excited about jumping into the

cockpit of a pimped plane and scorching the skies, or donning our whites to serve up a few aces, by far the most exciting prospect has got to be Virtua Fighter 5. Despite the fact the new trailer lasted all of one minute, it contained enough surprises to have us jumping and screeching like crazed gibbons. For those vet to see the footage, it features Akira sparring in a temple and then cuts to the likes of Aoi, Sarah and Lei Fei all showing off new moves and stages. However, what really got the juices flowing was the trailer's climax, which introduces two new characters. The first is a young girl whose spinning around on the floor busting a street-style break dancing move, while the second is a masked wrestler who looks suspiciously like

So the old cast is back with some new faces chucked into the mix - but why should we care? These games are only for the arcade, right? Well, that's true for now, but Sega also revealed the specs to its new Lindbergh arcade hardware, which made interesting reading. The specifications for this arcade board are very close to that of Xbox 360, and though the board may boast a little more memory, the X360 has a more powerful processor. We fully expect all three of these stunning next-gen titles to make it to Microsoft's new machine.

While we were swooning over the likes of Virtua Fighter and Afterburner we came up with a few old-school Sega superstars (below) that we wouldn't mind seeing on Xbox 360 in the future...

SEGA TALKS TO X360... P96

VIRTUA COP

SPACE HARRIER

STREETS OF RAGE and the sale of the sale of the



All Continues of the Co

_ Making and real price

MULTIFORMAT

What's happening in the rest of the games world?

Let's be serious; we're all gamers, and some of us have more than one system. The Xbox 360 may be the big boy on the block nicking your pocket money, but there are some nice things appearing elsewhere and here at X360, we're big enough to tell you about them

JY PSP



ear, after making it till lores in America last April handheld a undoubtedly the most advanced palm games system on the market, and with movie playback, the Enthe bank, it is no wonder the has been the fastest selling ronsole of the year (so far price tag = just 630 shy of the Moon 360 Core pack! The PSF USB device for sharing images and music site, but this November will be GTA

TENDO OLUTION



REVOLTING?

Speaking of connectivity we need to talk about the Nintendo Revolution controller. This beast of a peripheral is supposedly going to change the was will play and break down the harriers of gaming (Is it? Is it hally going to revolutionise how we play? Well only though the day Nintendo Linveils its secret controller Gates and Kutaragi will slung Inciwiedge that Nintendo ha

WE CUT THROUGH THE CRAP OF THE PR MACHINE

he brief: In 2013, following an uprising in Mexico City that threatened the lives of the world's leaders gathered there to discuss global issues, the US sends in the Ghosts, a team of specialist marines equipped with the Integrated Warfighter System, a combination of weapons and communications devices that will offer one lone squad the edge over overwhelming odds.

"BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP **FOR NEXT-GEN CONSOLES"**

We're told the game will take full advantage of the X360's impressive lighting and physics capabilities, and though we're not talking freeroaming gameplay, the solidity and style of Advanced Warfighter cannot be denied. Each time we see this game in action it impresses more and more. A recent demo illustrated the use of team commands to develop the squad-based gameplay that has made the series a success. The X360's multi-windowing techniques really push this style of gameplay to the limits.

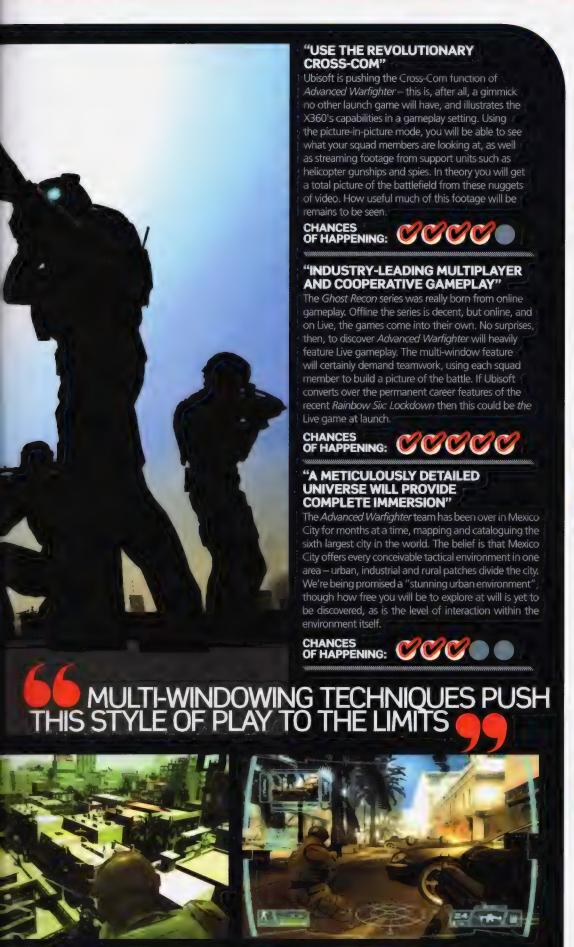


"BE THE SOLDIER OF THE FUTURE"

Advanced Warfighter is based on near-future military technology. Many of the weapons and gadgets used in the game are based on real hardware in development now. How much flexibility this will offer in-game is unclear: offline Ghost Recon has always been a little on-rails, relying on using the correct gadget/tactic at the right time. However, with the X360's power, a: little imagination and Ubisoft's knack for researching near-future warfare, it's fair to say that this is how the US army will be going to war in the next decade. After all, military experts say the next big challenge is to make the best use of men on the ground.







TRENDS: Fantasy Shooters

This month's three-of-a-kind sit in the unusual genre of Fantasy Shooter

1. WAREDEVIL



This shooter has been in development for two years.

The game will use the RTE 1080 custom-built graphics engine to power the action. According to Digi-Guys, this has been developed to create high-definition CGI, in order to deliver a game that looks pretty much identical to a movie-effects sequence.

2. THE DARKNESS



Based on the comic and forthcoming film of the

same name. The Darkness places you in the shoes of an assassin/gangster with the power to control demonic shadows. Coming from the developer behind The Chronicles Of Riddick, you can expect plenty of shocks as well as a healthy body count.

3. PROJECT OFFSET



Team Offset is a bunch of newbies making

waves with its first game, the oddly named *Project Offset*. It's a fantasy shooter in every sense, as guns are ditched for crossbows, and jeeps for dragons. It's unusual approach has earned it the tag of a medieval *Battlefield 1942*.



ON THE BLAG...

'What's the earliest I can get one of these 490 boxes then?'

he first thing I ever managed to blag was a Dreamcast. I remember hearing that Richard Bacon had got one for free by calling Sega and offering the line (make your own jokes there) 'I'm Richard Bacon, can I get a free Dreamcast?' Amazingly, it worked. This was years ago when I was doing a programme called *The 11 O'Clock Show*, and I spent ages agonizing about whether I was equally as famous, nowhere near as famous or, and this really was fancy thinking in those days, more famous than The Richard Bacon.

Well, the entire office brought me crashing down to earth by coming to the conclusion that I was nowhere near as famous as Bacon, but it would still be worth trying to get a free games machine. I made the call and was put through to some woman in publicity. 'I'm lain Lee, can I get a free Dreamcast?' 'Sorry, you're who?' came the reply. Disappointing, but I carried on. 'I'm lain Lee, I present a comedy programme called The 11 O'Clock Show, I just wondered if I could get a free Dreamcast?' 'Er, no, sorry, I don't think so. Who is this?' This wasn't going well and the crowd of office staff that were gathering around me started laughing as they realised I was failing miserably to even get any recognition, let alone a free piece of computer wizardry. I had to pull out all the stops. 'I work with Ali G and he was wondering if you would send him a free Dreamcast, care of

this was the magic phrase that pays

- 'It's for Ali G? Oh sir, allow us to bike
one over to you immediately'.

I was reminded of this whole incident when I was in a games shop the other day and I was stuck behind some fat dude who had obviously heard there were changes afoot in the world of games. He was desperately trying to get the guy behind the counter to give him the latest technology before anyone else got their filthy, fat, sweaty hands on it. I think he blew it the moment he asked 'what's the earliest I can get one of those 490 Boxes then?'. Christ, just sell the twat an Acorn Electron and tell him that it's the new '490 Box', then laugh as you sell him copies of *Dare Devil Dennis* for forty guid.

You've probably guessed from my anger this month that I have been unable to get a free Xbox 360. Microsoft completely busted me when I called up and did my best Jimmy Carr impression. They nearly bought it, but then I managed to say something funny in the conversation and that gave the game away. I have got a fella in Finchley who reckons he can get me a machine two or three days early, but really, what's the point of that? Looks like I'll be standing next to you in Oxford Street on release day handing over my cash. Still, I won't be one of those sad buggers that queues up at midnight. I do have some dignity.

for forty quid.

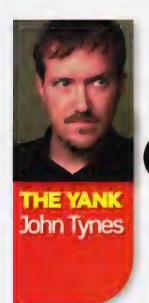
Iain is off the telly

Book and the telly

Book a

I WORK WITH
ALI G, AND HE
WAS WONDERING
IF YOU WOULD
SEND HIM A FREE
DREAMCAST





ON THE COUCH...

Look inside the mind of an American gamer - if you dare

s the standard-bearer for a nation of colonials gone wildly amok, it is my patriotic duty to inform you of something that may be shocking: when you apply the cheat codes to unlock the pig-humping minigame in the next Grand Theft Auto, it's going to be pretty much the same on the Xbox 360 as on the PlayStation3. Both systems sport enough graphics power to make your eyes bleed, and the big cross-platform games from the big publishers are going to look identical. Our glory days of asking PlayStation2 owners, "Hey gimp, how's that new Splinter Cell game look on your system? Haw! Haw!" are over. And it's a shame, because we so loved to bellow "Haw! Haw!" at them.

Our smug sense of superiority has not entirely dissipated, however. While Sam Fisher will be equally normalmapped on both consoles, there are still innovations on the X360 that make Sony look like a chump. I believe my status as an American gamer gives me special insights into those innovations. For as you may have already guessed, I, just like every American on the planet other than Brad Pitt, am a grotesquely overweight fundamentalist Wal-Mart employee. When I settle my bulk onto the couch each evening, it takes enormous discipline to make those exhausting disc-changing moments coincide with trips to the bathroom. For the most part, I prefer to play the same game for several weeks straight. Not because I'm hardcore, but because then I don't have to get up. Which brings us to the principal innovation of the X360: you can turn it on and off with the controller

Finally, while those PlayStation3 owners are sweating and puffing as

they stagger endlessly between the couch and the console, we Xbox 360 gamers can contentedly slide ever deeper into the cushions. Our shambling forms need not rise to face the day. We may simply sprawl, turning the Xbox 360 on and off as often as desired, not dead but dreaming. Slowly the molecules of our flesh shall interweave themselves with the fibres of the couch and we shall become one with sloth itself. Once in a great while, one of our fat-sodden pod-mates across the country will fire up Perfect Dark Zero for the eleventyeth time and invite us for a game, and our Xbox 360's light will flash, and

raise one great piggy hand and mash the power button to see who it is that disturbs our slumber, precious, and then we shall perhaps tell that person that he is a monkey-spanker. Finally we shall show him how we do things downtown, and then resume our nap.

So boggle at those screenshots and drool at those technical specs. Then remember why the X360 is going to own the PS3: because Americans know that it's all about staying on the couch. Haw!

John Tynes is a writer and game designer, currently living in Seattle



OUR SENSE OF SUPERIORITY HAS NOT DISSIPATED :THERE ARE STILL INNOVATIONS ON THE X360 THAT MAKE SONY LOOK LIKE A



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Issue 37, on sale 6 October

Every X360 game revealed!

IN THE WORKS

Your concise, no bull guide to every known and rumoured Xbox 360 game in development

X360 X360 GAME GUIDE

Formerly published by Microsoft, this left-field snowboarding sim has found a new home at 2K Games following the big M's decision to suspend its sports label. This game promises to bring the snowboarding culture to life with a mountain four times the size of Amped 2, limitless customisation and innovative Live gameplay.

2 DAYS TO VEGAS

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Steel Monkeys
GENRE / Adventure

Set over a 48-hour period across a series of American cities, this action adventure takes many of its cues from 24. To maintain the interest, this modern day gangster epic will throw every Hollywood convention at the screen, including car chases, casino shoot-outs and convoluted plot twists.

AMPED 3

PUBLISHER / 2k Games
DEVELOPER / Indie Design

APB

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Real Time Worlds
GENRE / Adventure

Dave Jones, one of the creators of the original *Grand Theft Auto*, has been busy developing for Xbox 360, and one of the first to come to light is *APB*. This ambitious adventure aims to take the *GTA* gameplay online into the realm of the MMORPG, and those huge open cities will now be populated by real people.

AVALON

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Climax

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

This multi-vehicle shooter was one of the first games to be announced for the next-gen consoles when Climax revealed its hand last year. Though arena-based vehicle combat games have never really caught on, Avalon will use the Xbox 360's new Live capabilities to deliver 100-player tournaments.

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

PUBLISHER / Digital Illusions DE DEVELOPER / EA

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

The PC version of this online squadbased shooter is already getting gunplay fanatics slavering, so an Xbox 360 conversion should be a no-brainer. With the power of the X360 and the proposed expansion to the Live service, this has the makings of a killer shooter.

BLUE DRAGON

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Mistwalker
GENRE / RPG

This game represented the first true coup for Microsoft at this year's E3. The announcement of a new studio founded by two of Japan's leading RPG designers, Square-Enix's Hironobu Sakaguchi and *Digimon's* creature creator, Akira Toriyama, sent gamers wild with expectation.

Whether this take on a boy and a mythical blue dragon meets those high demands remains to be seen. However, with *Pokemon* still drawing the crowds, this could be an underground success.

CALL OF DUTY 2

PUBLISHER / Activision
DEVELOPER / Infinity Ward
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up



This epic WWII shoot-'em-up is actually looking better than the planned PC version. Making

full use of the X360's three-core processor, this game will shape opinions of Xbox 360 at launch, proving just how groundbreaking next-gen gaming will be.

Preview page 60

CHROME HOUNDS

PUBLISHER / Sega
DEVELOPER / From Software
GENRE / Strategy

A console without a mech game fails in Japan, right? Well, luckily Microsoft has got Sega on board its team in order to bring us the most realistic mech game to date. The developer behind Armoured Core is planning on featuring team-based Xbox Live gameplay as well as classic single-player tactical campaigns.

CONDEMNED

PUBLISHER / Sega
DEVELOPER / Monolith
GENRE / Adventure



Already making the headlines in many tabloids, Sega's first X360 adventure is a unique adult

horror that steps inside the world of the serial killer. Using every nextgen trick in the book, including Havoc 3 physics, advanced bump mapping and lighting techniques, this adventure is one that will definitely catch the eye.

Feature page 96

CONDOR TRILOGY ONLINE

PUBLISHER / TBC

DEVELOPER / InterServe International **GENRE /** Adventure

The developer behind the yet-tobe-released-in-the-UK Xbox game Iron Phoenix is planning a new online experience for Xbox 360. Details are scarce right now, but given the developer's history, an anime influenced action-RPG could be on the cards.

DARK SECTOR

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Digital Extremes
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up
Coming off the back of major
critical acclaim for *Pariah*, Digital
Extremes is a developer in form.



ALAN WAKE

PUBLISHER / TBC

DEVELOPER / Remedy

GENRE / Adventure

Remedy, the developer behind the *Mar Payne* series, is planning something a little more cerebral for its X360 debut. This horror adventure looks to *Twin Peaks, Silent Hill* and *Insomnia* for inspiration as, playing writer Alan Wake, you search frantically for your missing wife in the city of Pride Falls, all the while escaping his all-too-real demons



HOT SEAT

Combining FPS and Splinter Cell gameplay, and a suit that allows your character to 'morph' into the scenery, this shooter could offer something totally new.

DEAD OR ALIVE 4

PUBLISHER / Microsoft DEVELOPER / Tecmo GENRE / Beat-'em-up



Tecmo, the long-time Xbox collaborator, is pulling out all the stops to deliver a fan-favourite for

launch. With three new fighters, stunning animation and exotic interactive locations, this is a certified X360 hit

Preview page 78

DIRTY HARRY

PUBLISHER / Warner Bros. Interactive **DEVELOPER /** The Collective **GENRE /** Adventure

A bit of a mystery, this one. Warner has kept silent about the direction of the game, other than it will be a mish-mash of all the movies. The appointment of The Collective to develop is an assured sign of quality, and hints at a third-person adventure. A unique 'dead-eye' shooting technique is being planned too, something that suggests more of an arcade root than first thought Whatever the outcome, this unique licence should offer something new

DOA XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL 2

PUBLISHER / Microsoft DEVELOPER / Tecmo

GENRE / Sports The original Xtreme Beach Volleyball divided opinion like no other Xbox game. However, love it or hate it, a X360 sequel is a very interesting prospect. With the next-gen power available. Tomonubu Itagaki and his team can make the tanned bodies look incredibly real

ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

PUBLISHER / 2K Games DEVELOPER / Bethesda GENRE / RPG

After three years of development, hopes are high that Bethesda will finally realise its dream of a freeroaming virtual role-playing world on console. However, you will need a hard drive to play it properly.

Preview page 82

ENCHANT ARM

PUBLISHER / TBC **DEVELOPER / From Software** GENRE / RPC



Not the most elegant looking RPG, this title from Japanese developer From Software is

geared towards Live users, with potentially seamless transitions from offline to online gameplay.

FIFA RTTWC

PUBLISHER / EA **DEVELOPER /** In-house

GENRE / Sports With the World Cup next year, EA's next-gen specific FIFA Road To The World Cup could well be an

ntial buy for any football fan wanting to play out their dreams.

FINAL FANTASY XI

PUBLISHER / Microsoft **DEVELOPER / Square-Enix** GENRE / RPG



Though this is in effect a threeyear-old game, Square-Enix is planning tweaks to visuals and play

to bring it up to date.It's the only confirmed fantasy MMORPG on X360 'til World of Warcraft shows

Preview page 68

FRAME CITY KILLER

PUBLISHER / Namco **DEVELOPER / in-house** GENRE / Adventure



This promises to be a Japanese Hitman, Set in the year 2042, you will play a special agent on the trail

of a terrorist gang threatening to kill the population. A unique scan mode and GTA-style open world suggests this could be a bit tasty

Preview page 88

FULL AUTO

PUBLISHER / Sega **DEVELOPER /** Pseudo Interactive

GENRE / Racing One of the most complete X360 games seen to date, this actionracer from Sega promises to feature simple action, novelty 'rewind time' effects, and explosions - lots and lots of explosions

Feature page 96

GEARS OF WAR

PUBLISHER / Microsoft DEVELOPER / Epic Games GENRE / Shoot-'em-up



This shooter is a tour de force of next-gen effects and uses Epic's latest Unreal Engine (see page

24). Though gameplay remains proudly old-school, with its n invaders, the detailed visuals and frantic action should pull in the punters looking for a new Halo.

Preview page 90

GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER

PUBLISHER / Ubisoft DEVELOPER / In-house GENRE / Shoot-'em-up



Ubisoft knows how to make real-world tactical combat games better than any other developer

so the news of a new Ghost Recon title for the launch of Xbox 360 is very welcome Pre-order now

PUBLISHER / Activision **DEVELOPER / Neversoft** GENRE / Shoot-'em-up



With a name like Gun. Neversoft is promising a lot. By all accounts this Western GTA

>>

PUBLISHER / Capcon **DEVELOPER / In-house**

GENRE / Adventure



Capcom has its leading zembie development team working on the adventure, including Keiji Inafund who has *Onimusha* to his production

credits. You will play as a photographer trapped in a hopping mall surrounded by zombies, and your task in to escape. This lack of originality merely leaves more time for you to be stunned by the hundreds of zombies that swarm the stores and food south Funting for your blood



THE HORROR

DEMONIK

PUBLISHER / TBC

DEVELOPER / Terminal Reality

GENRE / Adventure

With Clive Barker directly involved, this third-person adventure should at the very least offer some surprises. In fact, Demant's is being developed alongside Barker's new movie of the ame name, the idea being that both game and film coas-over to develop a wider story an ambitious development technique. We'te just looking forward to creating havec as a wronged demon



ALL THE GAMES

- 2 Days To Vecan
- 6Gun iii Afterburne
- Alan Wak
- Amped 3
- Malor Avalor
- 🔳 Banjo Kazooi

- Call Of Duty
- Capital City High Battle
- Chambara Beauty X
- Crazy Taxi Next-Gen Chrome Hounds
- Cline Eastwood
- Colin McRae 360
- Condor Trilogy Onlini
- Crackdown
- Dark Sector

- **Demonik**
- Deus Ex
- DOA Xtreme Bead
- DOA Code: Chiono
- Duke Nukem Foreve Dynasty Warrion
 E-D-FX
- Elder-Scrolls III Oblivian
- Elveon

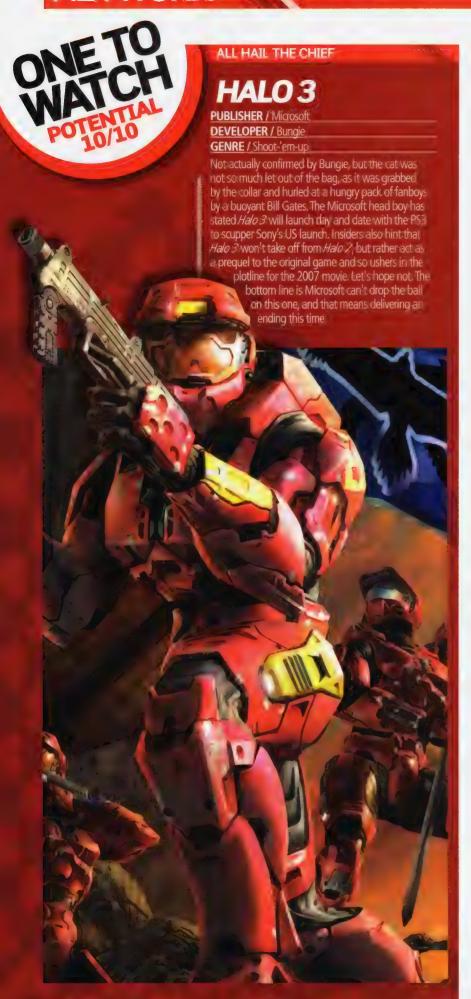
 Enchanced Arm
- Fable 2
 Far East Of Edent Zadio
- FIFA RITIVA

- Final Fantasy XII
- Frame City Killer
 Football Manager
- Forza Motorsout

- Grand Raid Off Road
- Halo 3
- Hitman 360 House Of The Dead &

- Interview With Made Man
- Indiana Jone Iron Mari

- Kameo: Elemen Of Power King Kong
- King Of Fighter
- Kill Bill
- Killing Day
 Killer Instinct
- LMA Manager 2006



from the developer of Tony Hawks is shaping into something special. Whether it can find an identity at launch among the established franchises is anyone's guess, but we're backing this one all the way.

Preview page 62

INDIANA JONES

PUBLISHER / Activison **DEVELOPER /** LucasArts GENRE / Adventure

Due for release in the summer of 2007, to coincide with the new film, this action-adventure is being touted as the most ambitious. internally developed game from LucasArts - which is no small boast for the developer that brought us Republic Commando.

KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

PUBLISHER / Microsoft

DEVELOPER / Rare GENRE / Adventure

Beginning life as a Cube title before switching to Xbox, Rare then decided to upgrade the game to X360 - a conversion that took less than three weeks (!). The result is

a game that combines the same evolutionary gameplay (you can turn into other creatures) with stunning High Definition graphics.

Screens page 24

KING KONG

PUBLISHER / Ubisoft **DEVELOPER /** In-house **GENRE /** Adventure



One of the first 'dual format' titles to land on Xbox 360, King Kong should offer a template

as to what to expect from Xbox games converting up to next-gen. The game itself is shaping into an atmospheric adventure that combines third- and first-person modes to great effect, as you switch from human to Kong himself.

LMA MANAGER 2006

PUBLISHER / Codemasters DEVELOPER / In-house **GENRE /** Strategy

News of a Football Manager release on X360 seems to have spurred on the Codies to push their console friendly brand of football management to next-gen. Improved graphics, a new transfer system and regular downloads are all par for the course, and will be featured.

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

PUBLISHER / FA **DEVELOPER / In-house**

GENRE / Racing

This new racer in the Need For Speed series combines the customisation of Underground with the chases of Hot Pursuit, and sets the whole thing in an evolving open-ended world. How many of EA's promises – such as unrivalled modding and cinema quality cutscenes - come to life remains to be seen, and compared to PGR3 this doesn't look truly 'next-gen Still, the licence-heavy gloss and definite launch day release will ensure this rises through the charts.

Preview page 92

NINETY-NINE NIGHTS

PUBLISHER / Microsoft DEVELOPER / O Entertainment



If you can image Michael Bay making a Dynasty Warriors game, it would look something like this.

Expect to see glossy visuals, filters, and hundreds upon hundreds of knights slaughtering each other across vast battlefields.

PERFECT DARK ZERO

PUBLISHER / Microsoft

DEVELOPER / Rare

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Again, this is another Rare game that has been in development limbo until technology caught up with aspiration. This prequel to the N64 classic promises next-gen graphics, groundbreaking Live gameplay and endless customisation.

Preview page 80

POSSESSION

PUBLISHER / TBO **DEVELOPER / Blitz Games**

GENRE / Strategy One of the many zombie games in

development is unique in as much as this time around you have to create a zombie army and overtake a 48-kilometre square city using traditional strategy skills. There will be five categories of zombie, a variety of military opponents and a planned Live mode



PUBLISHER / 2K Games **DEVELOPER /** Human Head Studios GENRE / Shoot-'em-up



Already a mustown game. Next to every other FPS in development Prey shines like a beacon of

originality. Created using the Doom 3 engine, Human Head has let its imagination run riot as you struggle to escape an alien vessel.

Preview page 72

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

PUBLISHER / Microsoft **DEVELOPER /** Bizarre Creations GENRE / Racing



This is the bia one, the reason why every rightminded gamer will buy into Xbox 360. The Project

Gotham Racing series is possibly the best racing franchise ever created, and from our recent visit to Bizarre Creations we can testify that this game actually looks better than the screenshots that have been steadily leaking out since June

Preview page 52

KILLING DAY

Details are thin on the ground for this next-gen

shootes though the game's name and early creens showing everything getting blown up

Definition graphics and a novel twist on the FPS

genre, which will naturally be taken online

PUBLISHER I'Ubisoft **DEVELOPER / In-house**

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

UBISOFT ON TARGET AGAIN

THE LINES.



PROJECT OFFSET

PUBLISHER / TBO **DEVELOPER / Team Offset**

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up Little is really known about this title other than it looks stunning and

will feature epic FPS combat that combines vehicles and siege engines alongside standard crossbows and fantasy weapons

The vehicles in question are actually flying dragons, and once the action starts to get personal, you can hack at enemies with your trusty gleaming broadsword.

QUAKE 4

PUBLISHER / Activision **DEVELOPER** / id Software/Raven GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Another must-have launch game, Quake 4 has been in development for nearly three years and it shows. Don't take our word for it: check out the exclusive gameplay footage on the cover disc

Feature page 08

RIDGE RACER 6

PUBLISHER / TBC

DEVELOPER / Namco

GENRE / Racing

Another one of Sony's core franchises is making the leap across to Xbox. This X360 version has reportedly been in development for the past two years, but no details are available. Given the series has been away since the lacklustre Ridge Racer V it will be interesting to see how Namco's flagship races sits alongside the stunning

Gotham Racing 3 SAINT'S ROW

PUBLISHER / THO

DEVELOPER / Volition

GENRE / Adventure

Not one to court controversy, The Punisher developer Volition has come all guns blazing with Saint's Row, claiming to have the GTA for the next-generation on its hands. On first look there is a certain

GTA whiff about this one, but the realistic look and city boundaries may put hardened GTA fans off. The jury is still out on Saint's Row.

STRANGLEHOLD

PUBLISHER / Midway

DEVELOPER / Tiger Studios/In-house **GENRE /** Adventure

Notable for being the first game from John Woo's Tiger Studios, this action-adventure is still an unknown quantity. Not scheduled for release until 2007, and featuring the likeness and voice acting of Chow Yun-Fat, Stranglehold could be a cult favourite. It's worth noting this is being developed by Midway's internal studio responsible for Psi-Ops, which adds a stamp of quality to the package

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

PUBLISHER / Atani

DEVELOPER / Eden Games

GENRE / Racing

If you can ignore the poor associations the Test Drive brand currently has, then there is a lot to get excited about with Test Drive Unlimited. If PGR3 is for the arcade racer, then this is here for the hardcore sim fanatic.

Preview page 70

THE DARKNESS

PUBLISHER / Majesco

DEVELOPER / Starbreeze

GENRE / Adventure

Starbreeze put itself on the map with the atmospheric and original Chronicles Of Riddick on Xbox. In respect of this, The Darkness has courted a lot of attention, not least



as the subject matter of an assassin who can control shadows suggests Starbreeze is about to hit us with another dark and tense adventure filled with the kind of light sourcing that made Doom 3 such a success.

THE GODFATHER

PUBLISHER / EA DEVELOPER / In-house

GENRE / Adventure

This 'dual format' release could make or break EA's reputation as a next-gen developer in the first wave of releases. The early screens of The Godfather suggest there will he little to differentiate between the X360 and Xbox versions, but here's hoping the world's biggest publisher won't let the side down

Preview page 93

THE OUTFIT

PUBLISHER / THO

DEVELOPER / Relic

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Mixing the free-roaming gameplay of Mercenaries and the squad based tactics of Ghost Recon, this WWII shooter from RPG developer Relic is looking good.

TOMB RAIDER

PUBLISHER / Eidos

DEVELOPER / Crystal Dynamics

GENRE / Adventure

Lara has only just jumped ship to the Xbox and she is already planning her anticpated X360 debut. That gasping you can hear isn't the sound of stunned PS2 owners coming to terms with their betraval, but rather the exhalation of an icon being resuscitated on a better console

TOO HUMAN TRILOGY

PUBLISHER / TBC

DEVELOPER / Silicon Knights

GENRE / Adventure

This trilogy has been in the works for nearly seven years. The Eternal Darkness developer has released little information other than to

stress it will be an Xhox 360 exclusive series and utilise the Unreal Engine 3



TRUE CRIME 2

PUBLISHER / Activision

DEVELOPER / Luxoflux

GENRE / Adventure

The sequel to 2003's True Crime Streets Of L.A. has already be announced for Xbox, and rumours are that an X360 version will be released early in 2006 with a graphics overhaul

TUROK NEXT-GEN

PUBLISHER / Buena Vista Games **DEVELOPER /** Avalanche

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Following the collapse of Acclaim, Buena Vista swooped in for this

prehistoric FPS franchise with plans to release an X360 version in 2006.

UNREAL 2007 PUBLISHER / Midway

DEVELOPER / Epic

GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Midway and Epic are yet to confirm the development of this game, but with Epic's Mark Rein singing the praises of Xbox 360 and a distant PC release date of 2007, we'd guess there was a conversion on the cards.

WARDEVIL

PUBLISHER / TBC DEVELOPER / Digi-Guys **GENRE /** Adventure

One of the earliest X360 games announced in development, this adventure is being put together at Pinewood Studios by former movie effects wizards.

- Madden NFL 2006
- Marvel Universe
- Metronome
 Mobile Suit Gundam
- Monster Madness
- MotoGP 4-
- Mortal Kombat
- NBA 2K6 ■ NBA Live 2006
- NFS Most Wanted
- Neon
- NHL 2K6
- Ninety-Nine Nights
 Ninja Gaiden 2
- Omikron 2 Operation Darkness
- OutRun Next-Ger
- Perfect Dark Zem
- Pirates Of The Caribbean 2

- Pro Evolution Soccer!
- Pro Yakyu Spirits
 Project Progressive
- Project Delta
- Project Gothani
- Project New Jersey
- Project Nightman
- Project Offset
- Psychopath Ouake 4
- Quake Wars
- Rainbow Six 360
- Reseviour Dogs Resident Evil 5
- Ridge Racer 6 Rumble Rose XII
- Saint's Rom
- Scarface
- Section 8
- Sega Rally Next-Gen
- ShadowClar
- Shadownus
- Shenmue III Sonic Next-Gen
- Soul Calibre Next-Gen

- Stranglehold
- Sudeki 2 Super Train Taiser
- Test Drive Unlimited
- The Darkness
- The Godfathe
- The Forer
- The Outfit
- The Urbz i Tiger Woods PGA 06
- Tony Hawki
- American Wasteland Tomb Raide
- Too Human Trilogy ■ Top Spin 2
- Tracer True Crime
- Turok Next-Ger
- Unreal 2007 Versus Tactical Action ■ Virtua Fighter Next-Gen
- Voodoo Nights ■ WarDevil
- World Air Force Wrestle Kingdom
- Zookeepe



NINETY-NINE NIGHTS

We predict a hard day's night of gaming.

SMALL DETAILS PUBLISHER / Microsoft DEVELOPER / C GENRE / Adventure

ith an acclaimed series in Kingdom Under Fire tucked snugly in the closet, hopes are highthat Phantagram and Q Entertainment's Xbox. 360 debut will be a fantasy stunner.

From the footage and demos shown already, there can be few who will doubt the impact of Ninety-Nine Nights. when launched this Christmas. For one thing, nothing quite impresses more than stats, and with this game boasting hundreds of enemies on screen at any one time, jaws will drop come December.

Details on how the game plays have been pretty thin on the ground, though coming from Phantagram we would anticipate a brawling fantasy epic with a touch of real-time tactics thrown in for good measure. With Rez creator Tetsuya Mizuguchi and his studio in charge of the production, we should see some originality too. This is: evident in the game's promise to place you in the boots of a cursed warrior, forced to live for 99 nights. The twist is though, that while you can't die in the game, those close to you can. Friendly characters will be directly affected by your actions too. Flip a friend off and they may turn evil and face you on the battlefield.

With a strong pedigree in Mizuguchi and Phantagram, this is a sure-fire hit for the Japanese market. And with any luck, the sheer scale of the battles should see Ninety-Nine Nights muscle its way onto the UK charts come the end of the year too.



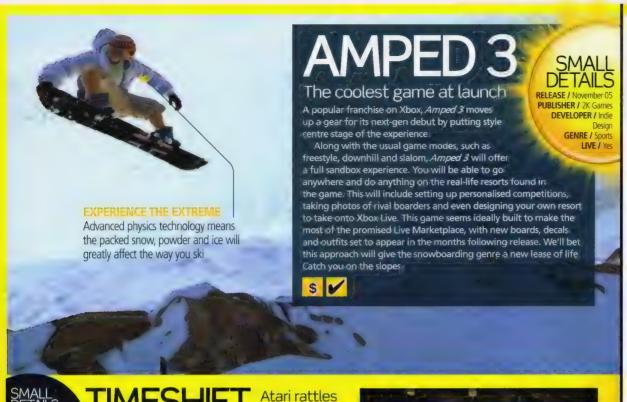








/ With so much slaughter going on, it's virtually impossible not ssed by Ninety-Nine Nights. It's like Troy or som



SMALL DETAILS RELEASE / March 06 PUBLISHER / Atar DEVELOPER /

GENRE/

LIVE / Yes

Planned as an Xbox release,

Sabre's ambition for its timetravelling shooter has reached further than

current-gen technology would allow, and so we have another FPS to add to the X360's catalogue. To distance itself from the pack of menwith-guns games, TimeShift will offer

the unique option to freeze, reverse and fast-forward time. This will allow you to dodge bullets, get the jump on enemy positions and escape formerly fatal run-ins with a hail of bullets. If Sabre can get the balance right, and compete technically with the likes of id and 3DRealms, then Atari could have a

its sabre











DETAILS **PUBLISHER / THO** DEVELOPER / Volition **GENRE /** Adventure LIVE / Yes

Getting in line to beat GTA

The developer behind The Punisher is moving in on GTA's manor, or that's what THQ hopes for In all but name, Saint's Row is GTA III glammed-up and running on next-gen hardware, or at least that's the surface impression. Sure, it has the sandbox gameplay, the open city and myriad game modes to get sucked into, but it also has Live versus gameplay based around gang warfare, full customisation and an impressive physics engine to make every explosion a pyrotechnic masterpiece. Of course its riding GTA's coat-tails, but Saint's Row's

extra depths could be worth digging into









SMALL DETAILS RELEASE / March 06 PUBLISHER / THQ **DEVELOPER** / Relic GENRE /

LIVE / Yes

Better known for its RTS games such as Warhammer 40,000, Relic's first Xbox 360 title is a slight departure. We say

'slight', as although The Outfit is a free-roaming shooter in the mould of Mercenaries, it does feature a deeper tactical edge.

You will be placed in control of a WWII squad, swapping between the

differently skilled troops as needed in order to overpower the enemy. From what we've seen, the action is fast and explosive. Every element of the terrain can be destroyed, and the swift character select menu places tactical thought at the heart of the action.

Slick graphics, full-on action and some deeper ideas point to The Outfit being THQ's surprise hit for 2006.











PROFILE

Bethesda

Currently hammering the final touches into Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion, this respected PC developer, forged from a collective of artists, designers, programmers and directors sitting under the ZeniMax umbrella, has been pounding the game streets for more than 12 years. The developer is best known for the ground-breaking free-roaming *Elder* Scrolls series.



WORKING ON Oblivion

KEY TITLES

- Elder Scrolls
- · Pirates Of The Caribbean

PLAN AHEAD, THE ESSENTIAL

SHOOT-



GHOST RECON AWF

Shaping into the perfect squad-based shooter

OUAKE 4 No one knows the FPS genre as well as id

PERFECT DARK ZERO

Rare never fails to deliver on its promises

PREY After nine years of development, this can't fail

CALL OF DUTY 2

So realistic you'll suffer shellshock. Possibly

HORIZON CHANCES OF...

Perfect Dark Zero making its launch date

64%

Getting an Xbox 360 before Christmas

88%

Selling a kidney to pay for a High Definition TV

74%

Saying, "great news, FIFA Street 2 is coming to Xbox 360!"

0%

ONE MINUTE ROAST

"The extra tenner"

Why price the Xbox 360 at £209.99, and not a straight two hundred notes? We like to keep life simple and deal in round numbers. Microsoft wouldn't have us buy the Xbox 359.99, so why tack on the extra wallet-damaging digits?

LET'S FACE IT -

Mr Gates already has more green than a Welsh meadow, but he could always do with that little bit more.

042 / X360 MAGAZINE

The great and the good coming your way in the next year

RELEASELIST



CALL OF DUTY 2

Activision's PC conversion of this WWII shooter is set to dominate the charts come November, and by all accounts it plays superbly. Our man in the trenches has just returned from Poland with a first-hand account. Read about it next issue

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Amped 3	2K Games
Call Of Duty 2	Activision
Condemned	Sega
Dead Rising	Capcom
Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	2K Games
Frame City Killer	Namco
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft
Gun	Activision
Kameo: Elements Of Power	Microsoft
King Kong	Ubisoft
Madden NFL 2006	EA
NBA 2K6	2K Games
NBA Live 2006	EA
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	EA
NHL 2K6	2K Games
Project Gotham Racing 3	Microsoft
Quake 4	Activision
Ridge Racer 6	Namco
Saint's Row	THQ
Tiger Woods PGA 2006	EA
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision
Top Spin 2	2K Games

DECEMBER

Dark Sector	TBC
Dead Or Alive 4	Microsoft
Demonik	TBC
Enchanted Arm	TBC
Everparty	Microsoft
Final Fantasy XI	Microsoft



Ninety-Nine Nights	Microsoft
Perfect Dark Zero	Microsoft
Rumble Rose XX	Konami
The Darkness	Majesco
True Crime 2	Activision

QUARTER 1 2006

4-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1	
Alan Wake	TBC
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	EA
Burnout 360	EA
Chrome Hounds	Sega
Far East Of Eden: Zaria	Square
FIFA Road To The World Cup	EA
FIFA Street 2	EA
Fight Night 3	EA
Full Auto	Sega
Football Manager 2006	Sega
LMA Manager 2006	Codemasters
Lost Odyssey	Microsoft
Love Football	Namco
Possession	TBC
Prey	2K Games
Stranglehold	Midway
Scarface: The World Is Yours	Vivendi
Test Drive Unlimited	Atari
TimeShift	Atari
The Godfather	EA
The Outfit	THQ
Turok Next-Gen	Buena Vista
Wrestle Kingdom	TBC

2006

2 Days To Vegas	TBC
Avalon	TBC
Banjo Kazooie	Microsoft
Blue Dragon	Microsoft
Colin McRae 360	Codemasters
Condor Trilogy Onli	ne TBC
Dirty Harry	Warner Bros. Interactive
Driver 4	Atari

DOA Xtreme Beach Volle	
	ey Ball 2 Microsoft
DOA Code: Chronos	Microsoft
Duke Nukem Forever	TBC
Elveon	TBC
Fable 2	Microsoft
Final Fantasy XII	Microsoft
Forza Motorsport 2	Microsoft
Gears Of War	Microsoft
Halo 3	Microsoft
Huxley	TBC
Infraworld	TBC
Indiana Jones	Activision
Jade Empire 2	Microsoft
Jason Bourne	Vivendi
Justice League of America	Warner Bros. Interactive
Juiced 2	THQ
King Of Fighters Maximu	m Impact 2 Ignition
Killing Day	
	Ubisoft
Metronome	Ubisoft TBC
Metronome Monster Madness	
	TBC
Monster Madness	TBC TBC
Monster Madness MotoGP 4	TBC TBC THQ
Monster Madness MotoGP 4 Mortal Kombat 7	TBC TBC THQ Midway
Monster Madness MotoGP 4 Mortal Kombat 7 Ninja Gaiden 2	TBC TBC THQ Midway Microsoft TBC
Monster Madness MotoGP 4 Mortal Kombat 7 Ninja Gaiden 2 Omikron 2	TBC TBC THQ Midway Microsoft TBC
Monster Madness MotoGP 4 Mortal Kombat 7 Ninja Gaiden 2 Ornikron 2 Pirates Of The Caribbean	TBC TBC THQ Midway Microsoft TBC 2 Buena Vista
Monster Madness MotoGP 4 Mortal Kombat 7 Ninja Gaiden 2 Omikron 2 Pirates Of The Caribbean Pro Evolution Soccer 5	TBC TBC THQ Midway Microsoft TBC 2 Buena Vista Konami
Monster Madness MotoGP 4 Mortal Kombat 7 Ninja Gaiden 2 Ornikron 2 Pirates Of The Caribbean Pro Evolution Soccer 5 Resident Evil 5	TBC TBC THQ Midway Microsoft TBC 2 Buena Vista Konami Capcom



Sudeki 2	Microsoft
Tomb Raider Next-Gen	SCi
Too Human Trilogy	TBC
Unreal Tournament 2007	Midway
Wardevil	TBC
World Airforce	TBC
Zoids	TBC



cover Exclusive,





HARDWARE TEST

XBOX 360: BEHIND THE SPIN

There's no doubt about it. The Xbox 360 is going to change your life. **Jay Filmer** explains why and how







e are going to reach one billion people," chimed the spooky-yet-charismatic J Allard to an excitable crowd at Microsoft's pre-E3 Xbox 360 unveiling. A stunning proclamation, signifying the high hopes and ambition that the Xbox figurehead has for what is now being called the 'HD era'.

But what does this really mean? Was it simply pep talk cunningly designed to weave unrestrained enthusiasm through the air of May's Xbox 360 unveiling? Or is Microsoft genuinely aiming to be an instrumental force in pushing the industry past one billion console owners with its high-definition wonder gaming machine that's always connected? Does Microsoft see this as an achievable goal within the next five or six-year time frame? And how are this many people going to be attracted?

When you break it down, this is a phenomenally difficult goal to achieve. Just look at the current numbers: this generation Microsoft has sold over 20 million consoles and has been bested by Sony's PS2, which, thanks to a stunning combination of crucial factors (most notably its ability to surf the wave of success generated by the first

PlayStation console, and its long head start over both Xbox and GameCube) has now topped 90 million. How exactly does J Allard see the follow-up to a 20 million-selling machine being a central force in pushing the industry as a whole through one billion?

Put simply, Microsoft sees the realisation of this goal being in the company's ability to not just create a massively powerful games machine that appeals to core gamers, but attract newcomers to whom gaming isn't a central element of life through media convergence, communication and simplicity.

ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE

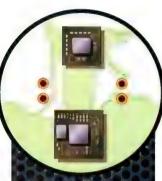
Obviously, pleasing the core existing user is Microsoft's first consideration – it is primarily a games machine after all – and to do this it has created a hugely powerful console and expanded Xbox Live immeasurably.

Xbox Live is without argument the best service for online play currently available; encompassing all games you play within one single identity, allowing gamers to view friends and communicate no matter what titles » p48



THE LIFESTYLE EXPOSED

What life will be like when Xbox 360 unifies your living room (and the lottery does you a favour)



UNPARALLELED **POWER** Featuring three cores with

its scarily powerful CPU and boasting a terabyte of overall performance the Xbox 360 is the most powerful gaming device you can buy this Christmas and will hold its own for many years yet, as developers manage to get their heads around the unique architecture of the machine (Microsoft estimates it has an eight to ten year lifespan) You're probably hearing a lot about PS3 right now but ignore the hype - the developers we've spoken to all say there's little difference between the two consoles in terms of raw technical ability. The only real factor separating them is online capability which Xbox wins hands down, thanks to the wonder of Xbox Live

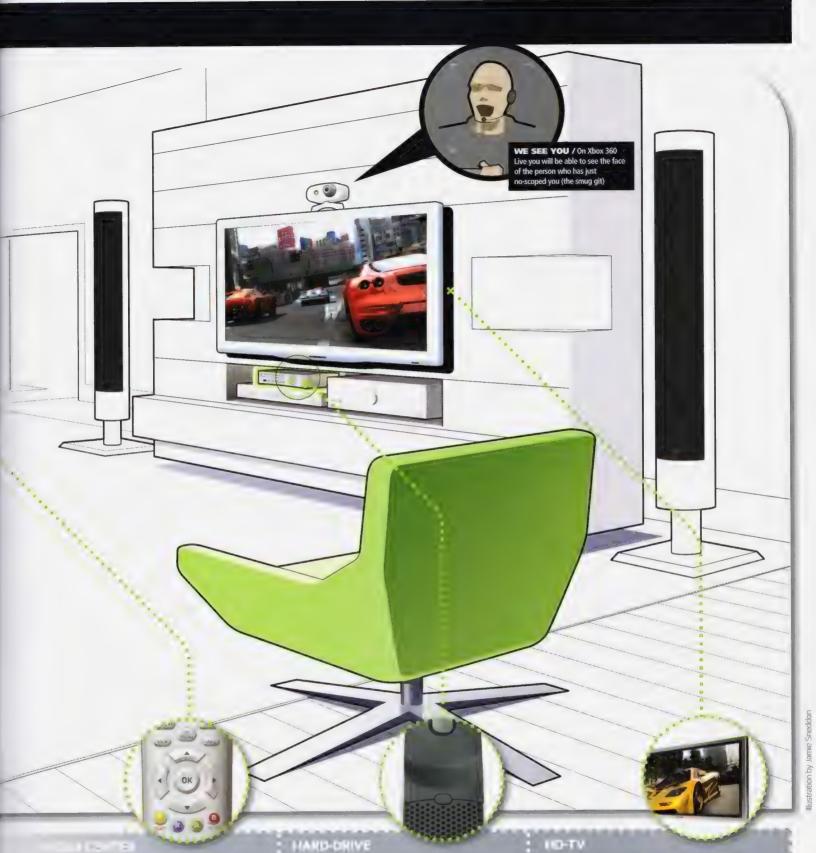


Based on the current Xbox Controller S design, the Xbox 360's pad is lighter and moves the black and white buttons to just in front of the analogue triggers. The main addition is the 'X' button in the centre, which pauses any current activity and opens up the operating system. You can then access new music to stream behind the game, contact a friend over Live or check the progress of your downloads. Finally, the controller is wireless (unless you're

buying the Core package). This removes messy wires but also creates an opportunity to lose the controller down the back of the sofa. Beware.

The Xbox 360 is going to be the centre of your media world, so it's only right it should work with your impressive collection of portable devices. It will work with MP3 players, allowing you to stream music from the device and through the Xbox 360, providing a much easier way to listen to music during gameplay than ripping CDs to the hard drive as with the original Xbox. Also, expect to be able to hook up digital cameras and other USB storage devices, such as Sony's PSP file access. It doesn't matter that you have a range of products from rival companies -- they will work with Xbox 360.

Using a combination of the Xbox 360's Live camera, headset and your TV's speakers, you can video chat with similarly equipped chums for no extra cost. When Xbox 360 takes off, millions of people will be making national and international video calls over their broadband connection. Businessmen will use Xbox 360 for conference calls, as it's possible to talk to more than one person at a time. And imagine what it will do for couples fond of cyber sex! Basically, it will be like those video-telephone systems in futuristic films such as Total Recall, except it will be in your house for no extra money.



Using Windows Media Center extender, the Xbox 360 can communicate with your Media Center PC by playing movies and recorded TV programmes over your home network. This is great if you happen to use your PC to receive and record TV programmes. Also, instead of watching your impressive-yet-scary collection of downloaded 'movie clips' hunched over your PC desk in the dark as usual, you can even view them from the comfort of your sofa on a much bigger TV with not very much effort. Xbox 360 and Windows Media Center will change the way people masturbate, forever!

Integral to just about everything Xbox 360 does is the optional 20Gb hard drive that comes in the more expensive configuration. As well as being a simple cost-effective solution for game saves and downloadable content, in the same manner as the original Xbox's hard drive, it can also be used to store media that you've (legally) downloaded from the internet, as well as pictures from a digital camera. In addition, due to the way you can detach it from the console, the Xbox 360 gives you an effective method of transporting large files not suited for email between physical locations.

The emphasis that's been placed on high-definition TVs by both Microsoft and Sony has been as worrying as it is exciting, especially for us Brits who live in a country where HD-TVs are still slightly too expensive for the average working person to buy without feeling guilty. Still, HD-TV is definitely the future, and should be supported. Games will look fantastic on normal TV sets, but when you finally get around to treating yourself to that 42-inch HD-TV at the expense of meals for your family, you will see what all the fuss is about. The added clarity and detail is astounding.

5 X

FEATURE



PROFILE

This is you. It shows all of the important information pertaining to your gaming experience, such as how many points you have, how many friends are online, how many messages you've received and what picture you're currently using to represent yourself online.



MEDIA

Xbox 360 will do more than simply play games. Listen to music, watch movies, look at pictures and stream video files from your Media Center PC all from this screen. The 360 will undoubtedly be the centre of your world.



MARKETPLACE

This is where Microsoft provides you with a mixture of free and priced downloadable content that you won't be able to refuse. Microsoft will give you all the latest trailers and demos and will sell new maps and cars and anything else that breathes new life into old games.

VIDEO CHAT

If you're keen to dodge phone charges and like watching people as you chat, here's the answer. And if you can't detach from *Halo 2* for five minutes, this will be the perfect ice-breaker when female gamers come to pound your arse.

are being played. This system creates a feeling of unity and community and easily outshines the singular, onedimensional experience you get from the PS2.

Considering the idea for Xbox 360 is for it to be always connected, Xbox Live is central to Microsoft's entire next-gen experience. Usefully, the world is now prepared for online connectivity to finally take a leading role. Recently, broadband usage in the UK exceeded old-fashioned dial-up, becoming the most popular way people connect to the internet. The number of broadband connections has soared by 80 per cent over the last year alone, resulting in a current figure of over 8.1 million broadband households in the UK alone.

Xbox 360 is ready to capitalise on the rise of broadband and is offering the fundamental Live service for free straight out of the box. There's nothing standing in the way of broadband-enabled households from getting connected to Live with their X360 straight from the off and making use of free voice chat, messaging and downloading new content.

And the Xbox 360 is the machine for the entire household (mum, dad, kid sister, Autie Doris...), not just the traditional hardcore gameplayer. Everyone in a family will find some use or other for the local Xbox

360, whether it's watching DVDs, looking at digital pictures, playing games or chatting to friends. The machine is designed to work with every single media device in your home and will even replace some of them. You can stream music and video from your Windows Media Center PC; you can download films and music via Xbox Live to the Xbox 360's supplied 20Gb hard drive; you can plug in digital cameras and camcorders; you can watch DVDs, play video and music files burned to every type of writeable CD or DVD; and you can even hook up a PSP and play and view any music or pictures you happen to keep on there. Anything that stores media, Xbox 360 can browse and play. Looking to the more sinister end, you could even use the Xbox 360's wireless network adaptor to tap into someone else's Media Center network and stream all the films they have shared over their own network from the comfort of your own home - with their permission, of course...

The only question against all this media convergence is, do people really want it? Critics are quick to point out that previously, convergence products haven't sold well. However, Adrian Crook, producer for Relic Entertainment, believes in the future they will: "The

last time this kind of talk was in vogue was during the previous console transition – four to five years ago. A lot has changed since then. Now you're seeing plenty of PCs in the living room: PVRs (Personal Video Recorders) and Media Center PCs, but also game consoles hacked to function like a home Media Center. The market has all but told console makers it's ready for this sort of convergence, now."

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

In addition to bringing together the different elements of hi-tech multimedia households, the Xbox 360 is a convenient communication device that allows anyone to send messages and video chat with other X360 owners. You don't have to log in to your profile area to check for new messages, either; if you get a message or a request for video chat while watching a DVD, the Xbox 360's power button will flash to alert you of this. It is always connected, so effectively it works in a similar way to a telephone. Except you're communicating through your TV while sat on your couch in your pants.

Upgrading your Xbox Live subscription from Silver to Gold will open up your experiences to such luxuries as the Xbox 360 camera (due for release in 2006),



It's only on Xbox 360 that you will be able to see state-of-the-art visuals, effects and online play this Christmas. One of the best examples of X360's power will be Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter. The game will push the technology and gameplay to deliver a unique experience

allowing for not just game-related features, but video chat with multiple recipients. You don't have to just chat either - should you enjoy starting conversations with random strangers (girls), like we do when our girlfriends are out shopping, then you have the option to play a simple game of checkers or poker to break down the ice wall that invariably builds itself in such situations. And before you dismiss the idea that girls will actually be there for you to talk to, consider how popular instant messaging and simple online puzzle-related games are to girls who have access to a PC. Girlfriends and sisters all over the world will get hooked on Xbox 360, 'innocently' video chatting

with 58-year-old music teachers and playing simple games that lack the complexity that tends to accompany online gaming.

Best of all, it won't cost you more money - just the standard price of your broadband and the yearly subscription cost of Xbox Live for those using a camera.

powerful machines, and I believe games on the next generation are going to blow people away. It's not the hardware that matters, it's all about the games."

Being an Xbox 360 magazine we're not going to be recommending that anyone waits for the PS3, but even if we weren't writing this feature, we'd be hard pressed to work out why anyone would want to do this. Sony is fighting this battle on hardware, not software. Sony is struggling to convince people the PS3 is superior to the X360, because it has nothing to boast about on the software front. Microsoft on the other hand is a software-developing monster, responsible for the world's most used PC

operating system, Windows. For Xbox 360. Microsoft has developed amazing easy-to-use software that brings together multimedia functions, communication and online gaming in one package. Sony doesn't have Xbox Live and it won't have

The Xbox 360 machine is designed to work with every single media device in your home

THE COMPETITION

While Microsoft talks about the one billion-strong HD era, it won't be there alone. Expected a year after Xbox 360 is Sony's PlayStation3 - a games console similarly pitched in terms of the way it is intended to fit within home media set-ups. It is X360's direct competitor, but will it be better?

Just hours before Microsoft's pre-E3 presentation, Sony held its own unveiling and wowed all with impressive tech and game demos. The problem is, everything was fake - later it was revealed the graphics processor hadn't even been finished, the tech demos mere 'estimations' of the final power.

Despite the continuous and foolishly phrased insistence from Sony's Ken Kutaragi that the PS3 is far more powerful, every developer we speak to tells us there's actually little difference between the two consoles technically. "On paper both machines seem fairly evenly matched," confirms Alan Lawrence, technical director at Relic. "They are both very

as good software support either.

Importantly, Xbox 360 will have a good head start on the PS3, especially in Europe where Sony's machine isn't expected until a year after the X360. And when it does show up, it's doubtful its games will look any better than the Xbox 360 can muster. Factor in the PS3's high cost (it's expected to launch at £400), and its little-described online and media functionality, and it's not looking good for Sony.

Still, don't take our word for it. See the X360's glory for yourself in these very pages and on our exclusive DVD that's jam-packed full of quality movies of all the games you need to see. In our opinion, the future of games machines has never been brighter or filled with so much potential. The industry really could be about to go anywhere - and that includes to the heady heights of one billion players...

NEXT ISSUE: We take you through the finer details of the HD era, and why you need to take a deep breath, then level-up to a better TV...

- Three symmetrical cores running at 3.2GHz each
- Two hardware threads per core; six nardware threads total
- VMX-128 vector unit per core, three total
 128 VMX-128 registers per hardware thread • 1Mb 12 cache

CPU-GAME MATH PERFORMANCE

9 billion dot product operations per second

CUSTOM ATI GRAPHICS PROCESSOR

- 500MHz processor
- 10Mb of embedded DRAM
- 48-viny parallel floating-point dynamically scheduled shader pipelines
- Unified shader architecture

OLYGON PERFORMANCE

500 million triangles per second

PIXEL FILL RATE

→ 16 gigasamples-per-second fill-rate using 4 x-MSAA

SHADER PERFORMANCE

48-billion shader operations per second

MEMORY

- 512Mb of GDDR3 RAM
- ▼ 700MHz of DDR
- Unified memory architecture

MEMORY BANDWIDTH

- 22.4Gb/s memory interface bus pandwidth
- 256Gb/s memory bandwidth to EDRAM
 21.6Gb/s front-side bus

OVERALL SYSTEM FLOATING POINT

• 1 teraflop

STORAGE

- Detachable and upgradable 20Gb hard drive
 12x dual-layer DVD-ROM
 Memory Unit support starting at 64IVIb.

- Support for up to four wireless game controllers
- Three USB-2 0 ports
- Two memory unit slots

OPTIMIZED FOR ONLINE

- Instant, out-of-the-box access to Xbox Live features with breatband vervice, including Xbox Live Marketplace for dswinloadable content; garrier profile for digital identity and voice that to talk to friends while playing garries, watching movies of listening to music
- Built-in Ethernei port
- Wi-Fi ready: 802:11a, 802:11b and 802:11g
- Video camera réady

- OIGITAL MEDIA SUPPORT

 Support for DVD-Video, DVD-ROW, DVD-R/RW, DVT ++\ RW, CD-DA, CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW, WMA CD, MP3 CD, JPEG Photo CD.
 - Ability to stream media from portable music devices digital cameras and Windows XP-based PCs

- Ability (c) np. music to the Xbox 360 hard drive
 Gustom playlists in svery game
 Builte in Media Center Extender for Windows XP Media Center
- Interactive, full-screen 3-D visualizers

HIGH-DEFINITION GAME SUPPORT

- All games supported at 16:9, 720p and 1080, anti-aliasing
 Standard-definition and high-definition video output supported

- Multichannel surround sound output
 Supports 48KHz 16-bit audio
- 320 independent decompression channels
- 32-bit audio processino
- Over 256 audio channels

SYSTEM ORIENTATION

Stands vertically or horizontally

CUSTOMISABLE FACEPLATES

Interchangeable to personalise the console

FONES

NO CATEL

- * LIVE HELP LINE
- NO UNWANTED SUBSCRIPTIONS
- # GENLINE SERVICE

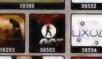
WALLPARERS















































WW.PICS4FONES.COM



















ANIMATION



COMPATABILITY: A: NOKIA B: MOTOROLA C: SAGEM D: SAMSUNG E: SHARP F: SIEMENS G: SONY ERICSSON















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EG: SENO PICSA 59894 TO 80010 TO CROEN 2 RUDE 2 SHOW SEND TO 69

45UB = 4FOR £450 TO JOIN PICLUS FOR EASO MONTHLY WHICH INCLUDES S ITEMS

TO FOLLOWED
BY A SPACE THEN
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360 We cover games in five unique ways. Here's how... **SCREENSHOT**

One screen, blown up big to show all the next-gen detail and goodness INTERVIEWED

The developer talks openly about the game

PLAY TEST

Hands-on with the game for first impressions

FULL ACCESS

Exclusive screens, info and interviews direct from the development studio

ROUND-UP

Unique games, updates and dual-format releases that you should keep an eye on

X360 PREVIEW GAMES
CONTENTS

52 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

Our man visits Bizarre to see the hottest racer in action

RESIDENT EVIL 5

Capcom finally shows Xbox some respect

CALL OF DUTY 2
So good looking it'll

date your sister

GUN

For a few dollars more

For a few dollars more... we'd take this home

FANTASY XI
Classic men-being-girlsonline action

FINAL

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

More finesse than

Henry's right foot

PREY

Not a Take That tribute, but the best shooter since *Halo*

DEAD OR
ALIVE 4
Tecmo threatens Virtua
Fighter's hardcore rep

ZERO Rare spills the beans on

its anticipated shooter

PERFECT DARK

ELDER SCROLLS
IV: OBLIVION

ambitious RPG ever put to silicon

FRAME CITY
KILLER
Namco prepares to

make us all an offer

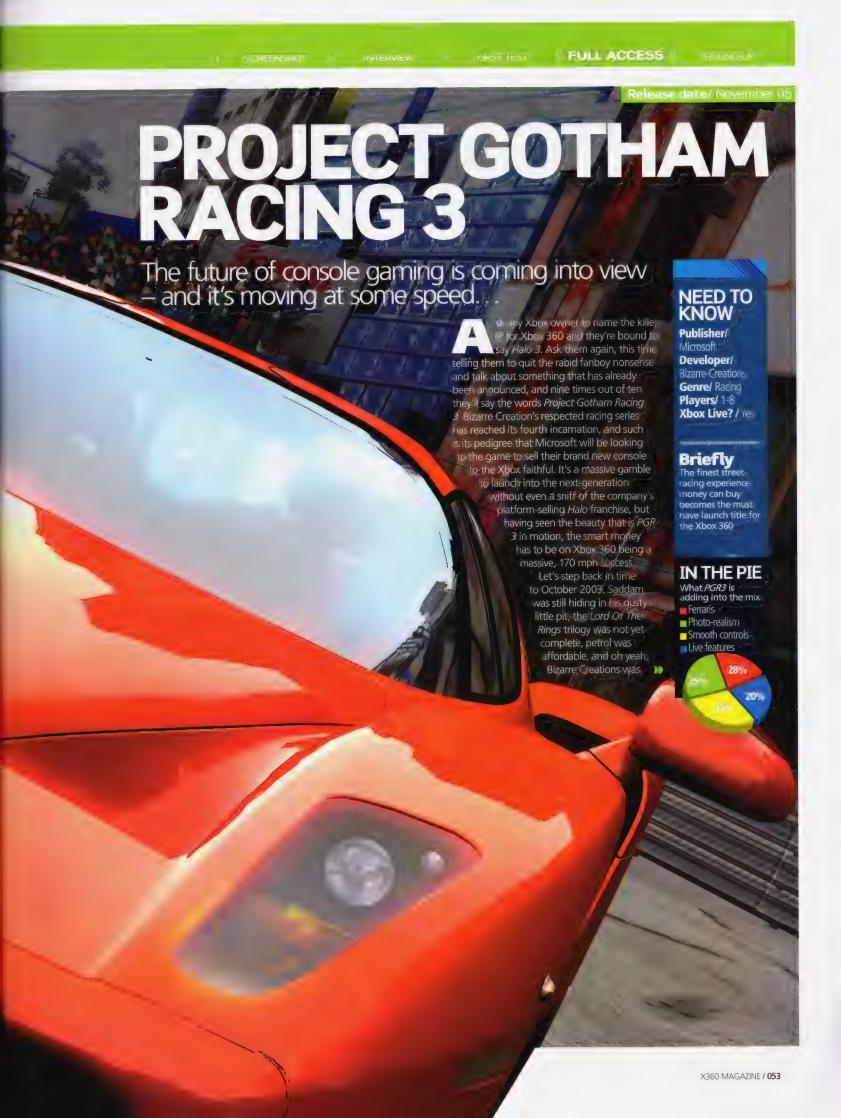
GEARS OF WAR
The cogs are turning

ROUND-UP
Need For Speed Most

Wanted, Amped 3, Tiger Woods PGA 2006, Top Spin 2, The Godfather

X360 MAGAZINE / 051

PREVIEW Exclusive STUDIO VISIT ON THE X360 DISC Teaser trailer Gameplay trailer Extended trailer Screenshot montage Alternative audio track New screens and details **052 / X360 MAGAZINE**



PREVIEW

)) about to revolutionise the way people played Xbox Live. Putting politics aside, the world has definitely been a better place since that year for Xbox owners, as the console has gone from strength to strength in almost every way. Halo 2 took the Live ball from Gotham 2 and ran with it, creating a community of over two million users worldwide. Microsoft also announced that it had another console on the way, which would be more powerful than any entertainment device that the world had ever seen. To show it off, it needed a game that had served well in the past, so the boys at Bizarre Creations were called upon to cook up some of the old-fashioned Brit magic to make the world take notice. The rest is history, and now Project Gotham 3 is lurking ominously on the horizon.

Too good to be true?

Fast forward to the here and now, and Bizarre Creations is once again looking forward to changing the face of the Xbox and Live again. Work is frantically continuing on the new project and the world is waiting patiently. Much has been made of the scenery shots that have been posted on official community site BizarreOnline.net, and chatter still envelops the forums discussing the latest screenshots or movies. Is that really in the game, or is Microsoft trying to pull the wool over our eyes long enough to pocket the £210 for a basic

Vehicles are able to achieve a minimum of 170 mph

package X360? Well, the doubters can stop doom mongering right now, because *Project Gotham Racing 3* is the real deal. It really does look that good, and yes, if you stop and stare at the buildings, they are as detailed as the tech screens. That is, if you have the chance to, because *PGR 3* is a whole new level in the *Gotham* series that sees speed and style taking preference over sitting around and admiring how pretty the cities are. What the Xbox 360 does, is take every game and crank it right up to 11, and in some cases 12. *PGR 3* is a trophy title, and the casual fools will swoon and stand wide-eyed over how damn gorgeous it looks, but the real power here is under the bonnet.

Bizarre has been making plenty of noise about the fact that all the vehicles in the game are able to achieve a minimum of 170 mph, and that the majority will be unlocked from the start. Well, from first impressions this is a terrific idea, and really puts the game into a whole new bracket as far as structure is concerned. Why spend hours unlocking a Ferrari F55 only to use it in one race and then move on to a different class? That's not what Project Gotham has become. Bizarre Creations has been given access to the most coveted cars in the world, and it wants you to use them and drive them into the ground both on and offline. Gone are the days of moaning that some hillbilly in the US has spent his life unlocking the finest cars just to humiliate you in a Live game. Want to beat his Saleen S7? Turn up in the brand new TVR Sagaris and out-race his whiny ass all around New York on day one. Each vehicle has a real-world value, and is available from the beginning for immediate purchase and street racing. Oh, and don't they look pretty... every car has a total of 80,000 polygons lavished on them, and all 80 have been at least six weeks in the making. That makes for a stack of manhours in car-coding.

REAL-LIFE

Streets

There are a number of real-world cities that have been painstakingly mapped into *Project Gotham Racing 3*. However, the one city that gets the palms sweating is Las Vegas; imagine the neon, the lights dazzling off the wet tarmac and, in the distance, Caesar's Palace teasing us...





IN SLOOP / The lighting effects are truly stunning in PGR 3, and our hot tip is to watch out for Las Vegas at dusk, baby



Living Live

PGR 3 to reinvent Live again

Remember how PGR 2 showed the world what Live could achieve? Well, new game, new console, new standards to be set... Project Gotham Racing 3 will feature Gotham TV, which is a service that will keep players constantly updated with what is happening in Gotham's world of slick street-racing. This will be done by allowing players to jump in and

watch friends race, or by using the ticker-tape that runs along the bottom of the screen, which constantly updates the player with different facts about friends, personal statistics, and how they stack up against the best in the world.

The spectator mode in PGR 3 will no doubt become a popular forum for car nuts, as well as Yanks who insist that they can drive faster than "those losers"!



PREVIEW



Only the world's finest cars make the cut

The idea behind the *PGR 3* tagline 'Life Begins at 170' is to guarantee that every car in the game reaches speeds of 170mph. Here are three that will surely proove popular...

The all-new TVR
Sagaris will make it
into the game, and
the signs seem to
be pointing towards
it becoming
a favourite
amongst
fans. Its speed is
guaranteed, but
what you also get
is a sweet looking
motor that easily
wins the 'how big is
your schlong' sizing
contest.

A big favourite in the X360 office, the Saleen is back in the game and ready and waiting to take on the big boys. This car packs speed and mobility in one saucy little package, even John Terry would look good driving this one to the shops.

The Enzo is still a king amongst Ferraris, but will it be phased by the latest models in PGR 3? We'll be guessing this will remain a classic on Xbox Live, you can't beat a good Enz to the finish line.





However, if the cars weren't up to scratch then they would look seriously out of place in the game's wonderfully detailed cities. New York, London, Tokyo, Las Vegas and the Nurburgring are all present and correct, and each looks even more stunning than the techscreens that have appeared on BizarreOnline. net. There are quite literally no tiled or repeated textures, making each environment utterly unique. Even the trees, which sway lightly in the Las Vegas breeze, have 8,000 polygons each. Read it and weep for joy, statfans. Players will be totally aghast when they actually see the environments in which they find themselves, as the detail is nothing short of breathtaking. Perhaps they'll even be too gobsmacked to start racking up the Kudos, which is a much more important part of Project Gotham Racing this time around. Now these special points are rewarded for all manner of crazy moves, each of which will be indicated

The trees, which sway lightly in the breeze, have 8,00 polys each

BIG IN JAPAN / Once again the Americans are showing their muscle in a foreign country, only without the possibility of wa





Licensed beauty

The Gotham series is renowned for its cars, and more importantly its immaculately designed Ferraris. If you want glossy, fast supercars then this is the only game you will ever need.







on the screen as in previous versions. Pull off a particularly crowd-pleasing manoeuvre and not only will the individually animated crowd members cheer and take photos, but you'll also earn yourself a Badge of Honour, which can be collected and put towards unlocking some of the prototype vehicles hidden away in PGR 3. However, even without the rarer cars the game will run at a blistering pace. The developer has already hit 60 frames-per-second, but is still concentrating on reaching this goal with all the visual tricks and illusions actually turned on...

New additions

PGR 3 is introducing plenty of fresh features into the mix to take the game beyond what many may think is nothing more than a visually stunning update of PGR 2. Bizarre is hoping that its new game will feel more like a real sport, and one that will bring together players all over the world into more of a community than any other racing title. The 30,000 spectators in any given Live race via Gotham TV should help, along with the 15 different types of online championships. The game also has plenty of other tricks up its sleeve, such as the addition of a new mode known as Play Time. This will allow players to simply mess about within the confines of the Project Gotham worlds, making up the rules and routes as they go along. Play Time, when

S A spot of Lamborghini action at the Nurburgring for you, sir? What used via Live, creates a sort of lobby where one player uses the game's Route Creator to design a fresh course through a city, which players can then race through, with whatever weather effects, rules, or stipulations they choose. It could be an Eliminator race, which removes the last placed player after every lap, or maybe a point-to-point race through the length of the city. Perhaps Kudos could be the main focus, and players will race to stack up style rather than lap times; during Play Time - both on and offline - you really are the boss. Even if you're not connected to Live, you'll be able to define the AI behaviour and vehicles.



The serious racers will be chuffed to hear that the good old career mode is back, online as well as off. Now, though, players will compete in each of the three main categories: Style, Time, and Racing. These will include old favourites such as Cone Challenges, Speed Cameras and Overtaking, as well as introducing new modes such as Drift Challenge, Break Through and Time Versus Kudos laps, where the player uses fancy moves to stop the countdown timer, and does a lap in a seemingly impossible time. Quite simply, Project Gotham Racing 3 isn't just cashing in - it's the fresh-faced future of console gaming, and easily the best prospect for Xbox 360 so far.

Andy Hartup

FACT: Those fancy dashboards you can see in the screenshots featured here all work: push a button and stuff happens!



PREVIEW





DEAD HUNGRY / Capcom has yet to confirm whether Resident Evil 5 will feature zombies proper or 'infected' humans

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Capcom Developer/ In-house Genrel Adventure Players/ Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

senre-defining The genre-defining horror series finally comes to Xbox and it could even land before the PS3

IN THE PIE

Resident Evil 5 will be stuffed with... Affective weather Zombies

RESIDENT EVIL 5

New platform, new look, new game...

ou read that right: after years of being ignored, Capcom is bringing Resident Evil to the Xbox, and it could even be here before the PS3 sees the shelves. After months of wining and dining the biggest Japanese developers, Microsoft's Xbox 360 line-up is really starting to look good. This is good news for us gamers, and these first details of Resident Evil 5 are proof that a bit of corporate snuggling can go a long way.

Onto the game itself, and Resident Evil 5 is shaping into the definitive game in the series. Taking off from where Resident Evil 4 left us, with the new over-the-shoulder third-person perspective in full use, the game aims to offer a similar mixed bag of action, puzzles and running scared that made number four such a breath of fresh air.

The colour palette has now changed, and the dreary brown muddied colours of Resident Evil 4's European setting have been replaced by the stark bright environs of the Middle East. This offers Capcom a good excuse to indulge itself with the X360's lighting and shadow

rendering technology, in turn creating a very realistic game world.

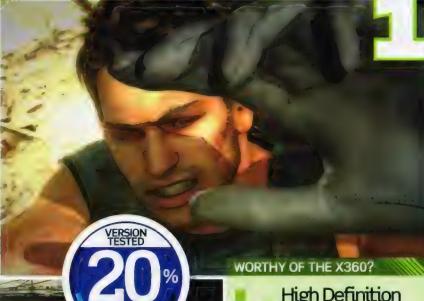
As well as allowing the developer the opportunity to make a game that looks stunning, the use of the harsh lighting also adds to the gameplay. Resident Evil 5 will place gamers into living, changing environments. The heat, for example, affects the lead character. If you've been running around in the midday sun for too long, the on-screen hero will overheat. Taking time to cool off in the shade of a building or cave will restore his energy - but do this and your character runs the risk of being stalked by the many slavering zombies

Watch beads of sweat trickle down our hero's forehead...





Capcom is using the X360's visual tricks to create a world where light actually affects the characters. Heat stroke, blurred vision and the recharge qualities of a cooling breeze will all play a role in surviving this Resident Evil.



High Definition ain't just about crisp graphics...

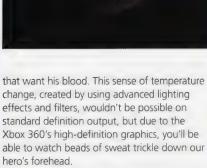
The power of the Xbox 360 (and High Definition output) is being used in Resident Evil 5 to conjure up some new gameplay ideas. First on the list is the game's impressive polygon count, meaning muscles in a character's face can be animated individually.

Then of course you have the intricately detailed environments, complete with an asyet-unspecified nextgen physics engin∈ to create a living world.

And finally we have the use of light in HD mode to illustrate changes in

> temperature. Using this the player knows when

he must escape to a shaded area and cool down.



If that doesn't shout next-gen enough for you, Capcom has put out some impressive stats concerning the visuals. The game character has an unprecedented number of polygons to create his features, right down to polygonrendered stubble. That's right: this stubble isn't textured, but rendered with polys. This has meant that the artists can set parameters for individual muscles on the hero's face, offering lifelike animation and reactions.

Speed kills

The game will also run at a smooth and constant 60 frames per second, allowing the designers to express themselves in more ways than the 30fps Resident Evil 4. This not only means the animation and character movement

FRIEL / Small vest, floppy hair, as well as designer stubble... Is Capcom too fixated on bad **Eighties fashion?**

will feel more realistic, but such a fast speed points toward an unusually action-orientated horror adventure, where speed of movement and reaction times will be crucial to keeping your head.

As with many next-gen games, a realistic physics engine will power the game. Capcom is toying with using a middleware solution for Resident Evil 5, such as Epic Games' Unreal Engine 3, as this works out cheaper than developing an engine from scratch. The use of physics technology like this will mean items can be shot and smashed, while kicking and pushing larger objects will see them topple onto your foes - this one new addition should put the survival back into the survival horror genre. Ian Dean

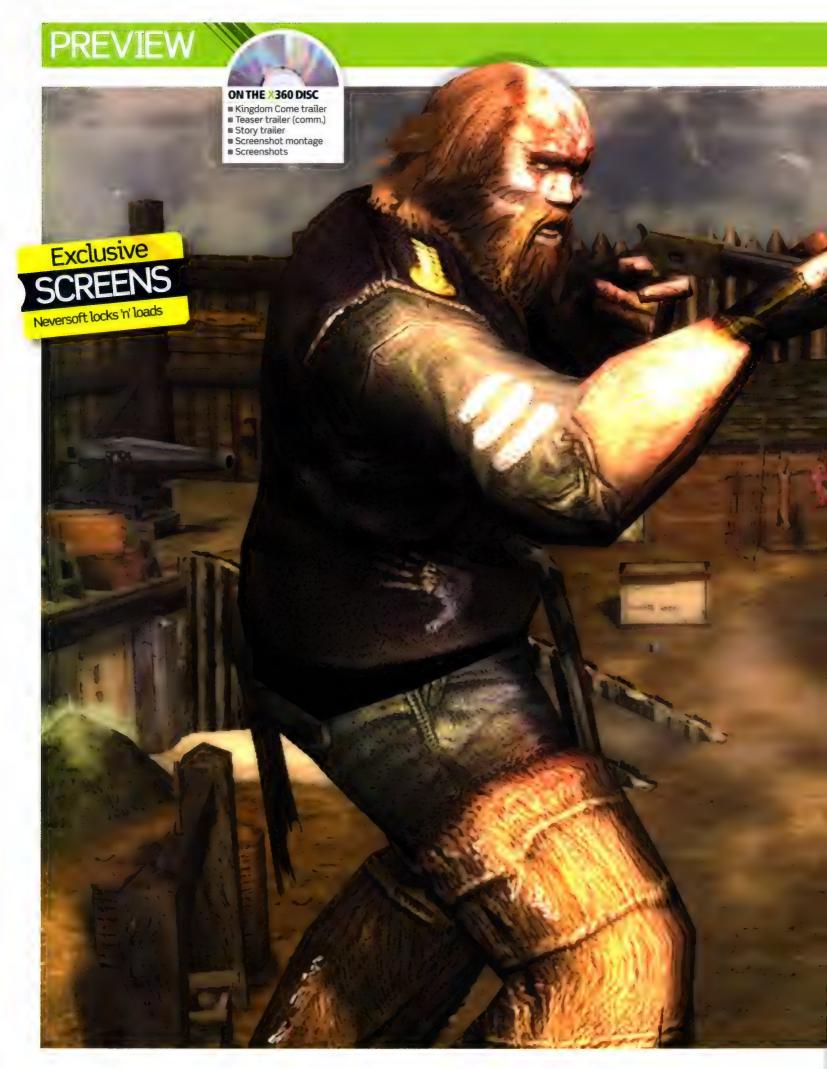
FACT: The producers of the duff Resident Evil movies are working on a third film in the series, and as a bonus for gamers they are also putting the finishing touches to the DOA movie. Nice.



HOW'S IT LOOKING? The cynics would say it's about bloody time but let's not dwell on that Let's look to the future, and what will surely the one of the defining games of the next-gen era.



Live Exclusive downloads New online multiplayer maps Co-op play Custom multiplayer modes and game maps This has smacked the graphics versus gameplay debate firmly on its raw backside





PREVIEW



Welcome to the shoot-out at the OK Corral...

The Quick-draw in action. Along with knife fighting and bare fists, the sixshooter is This is your standard form of attack. As with Red Dead Revolver when you enter the Quickdraw mode you will be able to see the trajectories of bullets fired and being shot at you, making dodging death more than a little easier.

Alternatively, sit back with your trusty Winchester rifle, lean around corners and put a piece of lead through

the back of an enemy's head from distance. This mode of attack delivers the best 'James Stewart' moments in the all of the game.

Finally, learning

to shoot whilst bucking on the back of a nag is another of the game's skills that you will need to be able to master. As with GTA there will be many missions in the game that will require you to chase someone down, but this is far more rewarding than bikes.

modern for some people today. This ain't the Sunday afternoon cowboy movie version of the heroes and villains of the period.

It's easy to get the basics across: it's GTA with cowboys. It swaps Uzis for revolvers, pimped-out cars for trusty stallions and prostitutes for (er) prostitutes. There's an expansive world full of ruffians in chaps to travel through, with genuine epic views moonlighting from their day-jobs as backdrops to the Marlboro man adverts. All popular cowboy pursuits are open to you. Hunt animals to get back a little health. Collect scalps with your trusty Bowie knife. Eat a ludicrous amount of beans around the campfire and suffer amusing bouts of flatulence. Er... well, not that, but you get the idea.

However, rather than *GTA*'s missions, which tend to take place in the game world itself with a task added to it, the twenty-plus missions that make up the core of *Gun*'s story are more

You can cut off the top of someone's head to sell it later





like traditional levels. Play essentially comprises of larking around in the world, perhaps playing a little poker, before you decide to continue on the main story arc's defined and elaborately constructed tasks.

Weapons of destruction

So why is Gun so brutal? Well, you can cut off the top of someone's head in the middle of combat, with intent to sell it later. But mainly it comes down to what happens when triggers get pulled. While GTA's gunplay has never been its strongest feature, it's here that Gun absolutely excels.

Your main advantage over your opposition is what the team describes as "Quick-draw mode", but everyone else will inevitably describe as "Bullet-time". Like Max Payne, you have a limited amount of this to use, which dramatically slows the speed of action to allow you to take down large groups of opponents. Also like Max Payne, you recharge the bullet by making skilled shots in normal play. But unlike Max Payne, you won't be doing much diving around while shooting. It's a little more dignified than that. Lean commands enable you to sneak around an obstruction and put neat holes between the eyes of three varmints who looked at your rye whiskey funny.

Unlike in Max Payne, this is Quick-draw's best feature, and is the thing that actually

makes it feel just like quick-drawing. In play, it zooms in a little, to allow you to choose your targets more accurately. Since this removes your peripheral vision, arrows on either side of the screen show you where other targets are. And this is where the Cowboy-Science comes in and makes everything better. By tapping right or left on the stick, your aim will jump immediately to the next target. With practice, you're able to skip between a row of Stetsonhatted targets and drop each one with a carefully chosen shot. It really lets you duplicate the sort of Samurai-warrior-with-a-six-gun levels of professionalism we like to imagine that >>



Chain reaction

No videogame would be complete without the opportunity to gain bigger and better guns, so here's one for the scrapbook: the Gatling gun. Other weapons in the game include flaming arrows, hatchets and dynamite.

TALKING TO DAVID FARKAS



X360 chews the fat with David Farkas, Activision's **Production** Coordinator, to find out what he thought of its latest production

X360: WHAT WAS THE MAIN INSPIRATION BEHIND GUN? FARKAS: They Neversoft did a lot

incredibly epic free

X360: POST-DEADWOOD, IT'S SOMETHING PEOPLE ARE VERY **MUCH MORE** INTERESTED IN. FARKAS:

Definitely It's no your Granpappy's

X360: IT'S VERY ATMOSPHERIC, ISN'T IT? FARKAS: I really ink:NeverSoft conveying the feel of

the rugged Montana wilderness to the New Mexico it's and in there and faithfully recreated. Especially the horses. The way the horses play.

X360: THE HORSES ARE REALLY VISCERAL AREN'T THEY? FARKAS:

X360: THE STREAMING WORLD ENABLES GREATER FREEDOM, DO YOU THINK IT'S A NATURAL IDEA FOR A GAME? FARKAS: Th

your horse and riding through the Montana



BEHIND THE MASK

I met the girl on Gunday

So why are these people all shooting each other anyway?

You take the role of Colton White, who returns from the Civil War to find his father slaughtered. Cue a serious hunt for revenge, taking in all the sights of the Old West. A woman will become involved somewhere, inevitably. And since this is a 'realistic' western, she'll probably be a saloon

whore. *Gun* is also one of the games that, rather than using some nonsense the game designer's sister has scribbled on the back of a fag packet, has hired a scriptwriter to create the story. The man himself is Randall Jahnson, best known for writing *The Mask Of Zorro* and *The Doors* biopic.





"I'm giving you some plot exposition now"

"That's fancy writer talk for 'Who you should shoot next' " pro-gunfighters possessed. It's a little bit on the awesome side. It's also at this point you realise that Neversoft's protestations about making a game that's deeply faithful to the period only really apply to the nice ideas of gentlemanly cowboys, rather than macho ones like these.

Combat isn't all about the revolver. You're also given the option of pulling out your rifle, which gives you a little more range, power, and the option of a zoom – at the price of limited ammunition and being unable to use your Quick-draw abilities with it. (But when you're kicking down doors in a whorehouse to blow some poor guy away with a nasty gunshot that sends him slamming against the wall, Quick-draw isn't exactly a priority.) You're also able to quickly swap to a knife for a close-range take-down, and sip from your water container



to top up the health bar, which some terribly impolite bullets have had the audacity to remove. (We do suspect it contains something distinctly more potent than water, however.)

On the attack

But what makes the combat feel so violent isn't just your firing. It's what happens when bullets connect. The opposition is divided into twelve separate zones, each of which can be individually targeted. While we're not quite back to the level of Soldier Of Fortune II's famed horror, it's a return to the free-form pornography of violence that has actually been on the decrease in the last few years (since EA decided that gaping head wounds really weren't needed for their World War II games, thank you very much). This is freeform





Cattle rustling 101

As with GTA, varied missions will make up the bulk of Gun's gameplay. However, unlike GTA these missions don't involve pimping cars, but rather puma hunts, poker parties and a bit of good ol' fashioned cattle rustling.



violence in that it's about modelling violence, rather than just showing its results. While (say) Manhunt's Pacman-goes-Snuff plays the same boring old cut-scenes as you do something unpleasant to someone's testicles with a rabbit hutch, if you model the effects of bullets, get to choose your mark, and have the advanced physics interpret things, you get a far better sense of the kinetic nature of hurtage. Or at least, that's how we're explaining why we're wincing at the wounds on screen. This precision targeting also adds to the game - veterans of old arcade game Operation Wolf will yelp with recognition when they realise they can blow up the Molotov cocktails being lobbed at their head in mid-air.

Horsepower

In our time with the game, the physics actually found their most poetic use with the horses. Seeing such a beautiful animal being taken down, collapsing in an utterly convincing manner, is more atmospheric than many games ever manage. Get in the saddle to either just get about or engage in horseback firefights, and it works just as well. Horses are hard to pull off, but Gun's move with realistic weight. And engaging in a shoot-out between bandits and ("Native American" - Ed) braves, with everyone on their own steed, is as wild and chaotic as you could ever wish. There's a smattering of role-playing elements throughout the game too, with you being able to gather better weapons and spend your profits on upgrading to a better steed. There're also



It's a return to the free-form pornography of violence

subtle statistics that can be improved, allowing you to develop your abilities in areas such as Melee, Accuracy or Quick-draw.

The pay-off of having a functionally better gunslinger is more motivation to engage in the sub-missions, or simple cash-gathering tasks, in the world. Sitting down to play a fully functional game of poker is one thing when you're playing for just imaginary money. If you're playing for imaginary money that you're going to use to make you able to shoot flies off a horse's tail, there's a little more motivation.

Promising all round then. Unique enough to be interesting, yet familiar enough to not alienate. The only real problem is that in terms of the actual gameplay, it appears to be identical to how Gun would have played on the last generation of hardware. The improvements are purely aesthetic.

Overall, however, Gun is looking to be exciting, big, atmospheric and, most of all, brutal. But that's okay. They didn't call it the "Well Mannered West", did they? We look forward to riding off into the sunset come its release this November. **KIERON GILLEN**

FACT: The game features vast real world locations that include the Montana plains, Kansas City and the deserts of Mexico.



PREVIEW







Does the real world look this nice? Of course not (at least, not where we live). Best to stay indoors, then

Liveaware

■ Gameplay access for Silver users willing to pay to play ■ A large persistent world ■ The biggest installed user base on console

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/
Microsoft
Developer/
Square Enix
Genre/ RPG
Players/ Unlimited
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly Let the moth leave

Let the moth leave the cocoon and start a new life online. Or, less poetically: this is probably console's largest persistent RPG world

IN THE PIE

All the good stuff FFXI will deliver

- FFXI will deliver...

 Quests
- Rare weapons
 People chatting
- Men pretending to be girls

5% 15% 20%

FINAL FANTASY XI

Why go outside when you have an X360?

ith online gaming taking a much more leading role on the Xbox 360, massively multiplayer online role-playing games were always going to factor in Microsoft's strategy. They are 'massively' popular, you see. While some people may still consider MMORPGs to be games played by social retards who hate leaving the house and normally smell of pasties, this is not the case – girls love them and everything.

For those of you who have never played an MMORPG, they're basically constantly populated worlds – just like what's outside your window, except on your computer. People from all over the world meet, chat, trade rare items and team up to embark on any number of quests. Final Fantasy XI is such a game, featuring multiple classes of character and the ability to create your own unique-looking identity before journeying into the world.

At the last count, 500,000 personalised characters are active in the *Final Fantasy XI* world, and due to sterling work from Microsoft – which has done a deal with Square Enix to

not just bring the game to X360, but to share the existing Play Online servers – you can potentially play against every one of them.

We say potentially for two reasons: one, it's unlikely you'll meet all 500,000, no matter how much of your life you lose to living this alternate existence; and two, a few hurdles stand in your way.

Firstly, you need a hard drive. In order to store your character information and updates from Square Enix, you need this level of memory – the 64Mb memory card won't hack it. Secondly, you need to pay a subscription fee in addition to anything you might already be

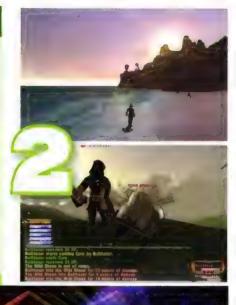
The most social videogame experience ever created



A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Friends united

This will be the first game to test the waters of crossplatform gameplay, as Xbox 360 gamers hook up with existing PS2 and PC players around the world. Can we all get along?



It's a whole new way of life, and it's your own...

As with other MMORPGs, Final Fantasy XI requires you to create your own unique character. In addition

to selecting your race, of which there are five initial types, you must also select a job.

This isn't quite what it sounds like jobs define your skill set, and thus decide your role within teams, but also

affect your appearance. You level up based on your job too, so if at any point you wish to switch to something else, you start back at level one, regardless of any experience you may previously have.

Still, if you have the time, being a jack of all trades will

no doubt make you very useful in battle.



paying to Microsoft for Xbox Live Gold. While this initially seems like a deal-breaker, consider for a moment that this is the only game you can play without actually signing up for the Gold service, so you don't need to pay two subs prices if you don't want to.

Okay, okay, so that's a bit weak - anyone who wants to play this will more than likely be paying for Gold as well. But seriously, it can't be helped. It's Square Enix that has to be paid for the creation and use of character accounts - not Microsoft - and there was no way the game could have come over to X360 without some kind of compromise. Surely it's better to have it than not? Especially considering that, for the money you spend, you're getting one of the most expansive, involving and social videogame experiences ever created, with over 500,000 players currently online.

As for improvements, there are some, but due to reasons we shall delve into in a moment, it's not some massive overhaul. As with all X360 games, widescreen and 720p high-definition resolution is supported, and as

ONE BIG FLOATER

/ Some areas are less straightforward than others - it'll take more than a pair of Clark's Attackers to get

such, the graphic textures are more detailed. Other effects, such as lighting, are also a bit prettier, but that's it. Square Enix has to keep the X360 game fairly similar to the other versions, because improving the graphics too much could be unfair. Eh? Well, this could be the case with draw distance - the developers decided against improving this for the X360



as it would mean we guys would have the advantage of greater line of sight.

Essentially, graphical improvements need to be subtle to keep the game fair across all formats. Without balance, the joy of playing a decent game with PC and PS2 players is lost, and no amount of graphical wonder is worth sacrificing gameplay for.

Jay Filmer

FACT: Final Fantasy XI character accounts are not restricted by hardware, meaning X360 players have the option to continue their games on a PC, should the need ever arise.



TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

Will Test Drive's first next-gen incarnation be able to claim pole position once again?

or its upcoming massively multiplayer online racing game, Test Drive Unlimited, developer Eden Games has big plans, especially with regard to ongoing content and community activity. We catch up with Eden Games' head of studio Stéphane Baudet to find out more.

MAKING THE THING?

33 Subsection 1. Approximately 18 months. The game will be complete by about January. In all, we'll have invested more than 24 months in it.

HOW FAR ALONG IS THE

and content... The content is probably 50 per cent, but quality is... well, we don't know. We still haven't got the game working with final hardware, so we don't know how many improvements we can do on the graphic quality and game design. So I'd say it's about 50 per cent. We're on track, as it takes longer to do the first 50 per cent than to do the rest.

WHO WILL SPONSOR YOUR COMPETITIONS?

We have a lot of partners in *Test Drive*, but the most important ones are the car manufacturers. With some we just have a licensing agreement and we pay them so we can feature their cars. For other ones it's more like a partnership where we do something specific, such as organising joint competitions with them, which are advertised on their websites and in car dealerships.

HAVE THESE COMPETITIONS?

Competitions will be weekly. We want the *Test Drive* community to be alive, so we want to hold a load of events. We have a small team dedicated to keeping *Test Drive* alive for 12 months after the release of the game. Also, we will continue to introduce new cars into the game. Alfa Romeo is bringing its new GT car out in March and we will feature it at the same time as they show it off in real life.

X360: HOW MUCH EXTRA CONTENT CAN YOU FEASIBLY PROVIDE BEFORE MOVING STAFF ONTO NEW PROJECTS?

for it, then it's going to be limited. We

have the budget for it, but once the budget is spent, it's over. So it's more like we're going to provide a service, an extra for the player, but after a while we will need to find a way that works economically. Either we have partners that will be willing to pay for that content, so that it can remain free for the player, or we will ask the player to pay for the additional content.

FOR EXTRA CONTENT AND WANTS TO EVENTUALLY SELL THIS ON TO SOMEONE WITHIN THE GAME'S TRADING STRUCTURE?

whether it's a good thing or not, because it's like second-hand games – you get the money once [but not from additional sales], which is a bit annoying as you have multiple players who can use the content.

We want the Test Drive community to be alive, so we want to hold a load of events

REAL-WORLD CASH EXCHANGES FOR VIRTUAL CARS AND RARE MODIFICATIONS?

try to discourage it by not being able to trade something at any price in the game – you can't give away stuff in the game, you have to trade it for credits. The biggest discount is 40 per cent.

FACT: As well as licensed cars *Test Drive*Unlimited will feature real life clothes. Bored of racing? Then why not spend half an hour in the local Armani store searching for a shirt.







Live cruising / Eden has some great new ideas for Xbox Live on the way



Car fanatics will be drooling at the thought of driving a replica Merc rendered at this incredible detail

Exclusive Release date/ March 05 Behind the wheel at Eden TAILGATER With competitions, downloadable cars and item packs, and permanent leader boards, this game is being developed around the Live community Test Drive features some of the most realistic car interiors in game. Normal mapping enhances the look, with wood finishes to most surfaces.

SPECTATOR / Sure, the interiors look amazing, but you won't see this in-game, right? Wrong! Test Drive offers a unique FPS view to scope out your ride from inside, as well as a muted 'passenger mode'

GOOD LOOKIN' / The car models in Test Drive look so stunning, so showroom fresh, so still-got-plastic-on-the-seats, it's hard to imagine jaggies will soon be a distant memory – unless you still own a PS2

PREVIEW \





>>> because we could actually see through it to the stark contrasts of the shiny interior of what looked like a human spaceship. Suddenly more aliens appeared on the other side of this portal, firing weapons in our direction instantly bypassing what should be two distant worlds. Our heads were spun through 90 degrees and passed through the portal, walking along what was once the ceiling, now the floor. We were guided past the dead bodies that were shot from an organic alien craft and set off across this new smooth and shiny man-made corridor. These portals remained open as well, keeping the entire environment alive for the whole game, and we watched as the worlds continued to collide as we jumped through another portal just a couple of minutes later.

You may have seen part of this journey already – it's on this month's cover disc – but this doesn't truly show the whole experience. When you get your hands on the controls, it takes a while to get your head round and your stomach back to something you can love.

The development team at Human Head, supported by the guys at 3DRealms, has taken Xbox 360 and worked on something that not only looks fantastic but also builds on the expanded gameplay potential that the next-generation consoles can provide. The likes of *Project Gotham Racing 3* and *Gears Of War* have awesome visuals that can push

Everything gets thrown around, not least our stomachs the limits of realism in Xbox 360 gaming, but the question is, will they be able to provide something new? Maybe not. We're not saying *Prey* is a revolution that other action/adventure games will have to follow, because the core of it is still a standard first-person shooter. However, it shows that Xbox 360 can usher in new gameplay experiences that may have previously been left on the drawing board.

Background chatter

It's a tale that has been 10 years in the making, starting life as a 3DRealms engine with early demos of a Prey game in 1997. These were the days that 3DRealms had put Duke Nukem on the gaming community's hero list - that's how long ago it has been. Scheduled for a 1998 release, Prey soon slipped into development hell as the members of the team left or were moved around, and by 2000 the game had pretty much been dropped. That is until Human Head picked it up in 2001 and rebuilt the project from scratch. In a massively understated comment when the game was officially announced as being back in development, 3DRealms president, George Broussard said: "The initial concept for Prey had been incubating for a while." No shit, but now we can see the benefits of putting together the right team and waiting for the right time to put Prev back in the public arena.

Steeped in spiritualism and mythology, *Prey* tells the story of Tommy, a Cherokee Indian living on a reservation he desperately wants to leave. He just hadn't really banked on alien abduction as his way out as the whole area gets sucked up into space. Then it's all about survival as he sets about saving himself, his girlfriend (bless) and maybe just the whole damn planet. Not bad for a mechanic.

Along with the wise words of your grandfather, you'll be guided by Talon, the spirit

"GAME OVER

Alien was a wimp

If you thought the chest busting scenes in Aliens were gruesome then stay clear of Prey. Whether they are running up slime-walls or dropping in from alternate world portals, this game has the weirdest alien life yet seen in a videogame. Star Wars this ain 't...





DE-FORWINDABLE / This was the worst ride he'd been on since the donkey on Blackpool beach got rickets





Hero's Journey The blueprint for saving the galaxy

The story behind *Prey* is actually based on a welldefined structure known as 'The Hero's Journey', defined by Joseph Campbell way back in 1949, which outlines a 17-point blueprint that a heroic tale needs to use. Campbell's other interests in mythology and spiritual worlds also feature heavily in the script. The hero needs a mentor, featured in Prey as Talon, the spirit of a hawk, and a set quest

drawing on 17 other mythological elements, such as two contrasting worlds. George Lucas openly admitted to using this blueprint for the role of Luke Skywalker in Star Wars, and the Wachowski brothers also nabbed it for Neo in The Matrix. So Tommy, the hero in Prey, is undoubtedly in very good company.

We're holding out for a hero



WE SEE MORE INNOVATION HE LATER YEARS OF A Scott Miller



TALKING TO SCOTT MILLER

3DRealms' CEO Scott Miller takes time out from his busy schedule to tell us what he thinks of Xbox 360, and what he foresees in the future of gaming

X360: THE DREAM IS FOR A DO-ALL **ENTERTAINMENT** MACHINE IN THE HEART OF THE HOME. DO YOU THINK IT CAN WORK?

WILLER: Not sure what you mean by "heart of the home" but in general, if Microsoft they a know that people rarely buy convergence oriented products instead its the focused divergent products that covers this in detail is The Origin of Brands by Al Ries

X360: HOW WILL XBOX 360 AND MICROSOFT'S **PUSH FOR CONNECTIVITY** CHANGE THE WAY YOU **MAKE GAMES?** MILLER: It's not going to

at all, because we already have multiplayer nodes designed and *Duke*) Frankly, think this

X360: DO YOU THINK **ONLINE GAMING WILL** BE AT THE HEART OF THE **NEXT-GEN CONSOLES?**

MILLER: It won't be the heart but it will be the legs, giving titles a much longer life

X360: CAN WE EXPECT **DEEPER EXPERIENCES OR** JUST PRETTIER GAMES? MILLER: Publishers are we'll see truckloads of prettier games that unfortunately give us the feeling of been there:

X360: WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL GAME FOR THE NEXT-GEN CONSOLES?

MILLER: From the down to aesthetics. For the most part this will sell a lot has graphics to the highest standards that the platform

X360: HOW DO YOU FORESEE GAMING **EVOLVING IN THE NEXT** TWO TO THREE YEARS? MILLER: really do no

X360: WHERE DO YOU **BEGIN WHEN FACED WITH** A NEW TECHNOLOGY LIKE XBOX 360 - ARE THERE PROBLEMS WITH CONVERTING FROM DEVELOPMENT PCS TO 360 BETA KITS?

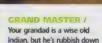
MILLER: Generally, there RAM versus PCs, and so are content a down-sampled and smaller chunks PCs are almost always the superior platform have but that only lasts for a few months. Porting to a

X360: FROM WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN IS THE HD ERA ALL IT IS CRACKED UP

MILLER: It can be, if

X360: WILL SMALLER **DEVELOPERS BE ABLE** TO AFFORD TO MAKE **GAMES THAT TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF XBOX** 360, BOTH IN TERMS OF MONEY AND TIME? OR **ARE THEY STUFFED?** MILLER: Developmen

costs keep on going up so unless we see downloadable games on consoles, allowing for small studios that make



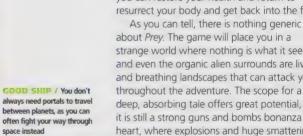
the arcade

)) of a hawk Tommy had as a child that will help out in certain situations and provide warnings of what lies ahead. It's a strange scenario being able to just kick back with a huge gun while an alien is having its face attacked by a ghostly bird. No, not strange: make that very, very cool.

Never say die

The spiritual theme isn't lost on the lead character either and Prey gives you the power to control the spirit within Tommy and leave his body as an invincible, invisible entity that can pass through walls. This is ideal for reaching areas previously out of bounds, to unlock doors and, armed with a glowing bow and arrow, your spirit can also take out totally oblivious enemies. The downside is that all this time Tommy's body is immobile and still vulnerable to attack, and while you're floating around in one room, Tommy can be torn to shreds next door - so you don't want to be away for too long. Dying needn't be the end of it all, though, and instead of having to return to the last checkpoint or start over, you'll instead be transported to another spiritual world where you can restore your health and return to resurrect your body and get back into the fight.

about Prey. The game will place you in a strange world where nothing is what it seems, and even the organic alien surrounds are living and breathing landscapes that can attack you throughout the adventure. The scope for a deep, absorbing tale offers great potential, but it is still a strong guns and bombs bonanza at heart, where explosions and huge smatterings









It's time to put a wrench in the

It has that Doom 3 look about it, but Prey isn't your standard firstperson shooter, as the upside-down gameplay shows, with your armoury featuring a strange assortment of weapons.

You start with a simple wrench (well, you are a mechanic), but soon move onto bigger

and better things that owe more to Oddworld than Doom, such as guns that can fire living creatures to rip enemies to shreds. Your spirit hawk is a mean fighter, too.

Backed up by the glowing bow and arrow you have when Spirit Walking, this is something far removed from a shotgun and frag grenade assault.



The list of weapons at your disposal in human form is an impressive and equally surreal collection. The guns seem pretty straightforward to begin with, but then you'll start to notice that many of these alien weapons are far from ordinary. What feels like a shotgun isn't, as shells are replaced by acid that makes a mess of everything it burns through. Or how about a living creature that attaches to your arm, becoming a set of projectile teeth?

The whisperings of Doom 3 are obvious, and Prey has a very similar blend of stunning visuals and comfortable gameplay - well, comfortable on the hands, if not on your insides. This isn't surprising, because Prey has been built on a much-enhanced version of id Software's original Doom 3 engine. The extra kick from Xbox 360 allows for much greater detail to the characters, down to individual fibres and skin tones. Textures, ambience and blurring distortion effects have also been improved, in order to create an atmosphere that has that



lifelike feel that Gotham and Gears Of War both aspire to.

Taking into account how early our demonstration was, before Microsoft began to release increasingly powerful development machines, we can't wait to see more of what Human Head has added to this game. Every new batch of screenshots that filtered through after we first saw the game in action has tended to outdo the previous ones, as

new creatures emerge and more detailed environments are displayed. It looked awesome on our visit, and it's clear that there have been no laurels rested on since the plaudits rained in following a triumphant E3 months ago. Prey just seems to be getting bigger and better. Despite its years of development though, it's not going to make it as a launch title, but hopefully we'll be able to get our hands on the latest playable version soon. We've ordered the paracetamol, now bring it on. lan Collen



Today was not a good day to

complain about the scratch on

the bodywork of your car

FACT: 3DRealms has a habit of working up games over a great length of time, and Prey has taken nine years to get to where it is. And then there's Duke Nukem Forever...





Full trailer (commentary)



HARSH BUT FAIR / The new guy in town shows us just how effective a reversal can be against the cheapest characters

Live

 Online tournaments, complete with use of the Spectator mode
 Updated leaderboards
 Supports the web camera for video chat

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/
Microsoft
Developer/ Tecmo
Genre/ Beat-'em-up
Players/ 1-8
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

A beautiful new episode in the ongoing *DOA* series, exclusive to Xbox 360. This time three new characters join the party

IN THE PIE

hat Dead Or Alive will impress with...

Beauty
Violence

InteractivitySinister costumes

21% 26%

DEAD OR ALIVE 4

The most beautiful game in the world

ne of the most important opinions you can proffer as a videogames writer is that gameplay is more important than fancy graphics. However, when a game that looks this wonderful comes along, it's hard to restrain yourself from getting more than a little worked up.

Screenshots fail to do *Dead Or Alive 4* justice. To see the game in motion is to really appreciate it. Luckily for you, there's a stunning new movie of the game on this issue's DVD. If you haven't already, watch it right now. Marvel at the grace and fluidity of the animation, the beauty and detail of the backgrounds, and then consider that when this video was made the game was, by its creator's admission, just 15 per cent complete...

This will be the most beautiful game you've ever seen. It will be so beautiful that every time you play it you'll find yourself pausing to wipe away the tears of joy clouding your vision. When you're away from the game you will feel sick because you're not at home playing it and the real world will seem ugly in comparison.

Dead Or Alive 4 is not just about increased graphical performance. Though sure, we (really) want to spend the next four hundred words or so talking about how the trees have the prettiest blossom, how amazing the monkeys on Elliot's stage look, and how all the ladies have the cutest little noses – but we won't. Tecmo is putting just as much effort into the fundamental mechanics of the fighting engine as it is those achingly beautiful graphics.

While pleasantly accessible for those who normally get wasted at more complicated beat-'em-ups, *Dead Or Alive* has often been criticised for its loose-play style that can reward

The real world will seem ugly in comparison



Prepare tor pain

Since its unveiling back in May, Dead Or Alive 4 has been wowing all who see it thanks to its solid, bone-crunching combat - and it's still being improved. Tecmo is currently adding effects such as blurring to moves, to make sure everything looks that little bit more impressive.







Three fighters, all of a different and very brutal kind

So far Tecmo has revealed three new combatants. First up is Elliot, the swordbearing girl-man who fights using

the Keiken fighting style, which apparently consists of five fighting forms based on 12 different types of animal.

Next is the stunning Kokoro, Tecmo's prettier answer to Virtua Fighter's Akira.

She practices the same Hakkyokuken style, and according to creator Tomonobu Itagaki will be much more realistic than Sega's leading fighter.

The mysterious final character is yet to be given a name, but we have been

informed that she uses the Mexican Lucha Libre wrestling style.

simple button mashes as opposed to tactical play. Tecmo has assured us that gameplay will be tighter and more complex than ever before. Will it still remain accessible though? Focus will undoubtedly be on what made the game great before: the ability to make a mockery of your opponent with reversals, should you put in the required time and effort to get to know each character's attack pattern.

One area Dead Or Alive has continually excelled at is with regards to its undulating, interactive arenas that go far beyond the scope of those found in most other fighting games. In recent times we've been treated to stages that progress from rooftops to the roads below, via violent drops against flashing neon signs; we've battled in deep, glowing, icy caves; and we've been amused greatly by smashing our opponents into a mess of roaring hippos. Dead Or Alive arenas are the best around, and, believe us, they are getting even better - smack an opponent into a pack of monkeys and they become your allies, nipping at your adversary's ankles. It's hilarious.

Again, gaze at the movie on your DVD and observe the depth, detail and the amount of scenery elements that you'll be cheerily smashing your friends through when the game is released with the Xbox 360 this Christmas. You'll be able to go pretty much anywhere - any restriction you normally feel from beat-'em-up arenas will be a thing of the past

Even the threat of police action won't stop the Tecmo girls from clobbering one another



As you can probably tell from all this gushing, we're looking forward to this - as should you. This will be the perfect game to show off your Xbox 360 this winter. That is, of course, if you don't just want to lock yourself away in a room and keep the sweet Dead Or Alive 4 ladies all to yourself...

Jay Filmer

FACT: You may want to stop reading now... as we reveal Holly Valance has signed on to star in the new Dead Or Alive film, due for release next summer. (Told you not to read.)

HOW'S IT LOOKING? We want this game, if only to sit and gaze at it. We still play DOA Ultimate on Xbox Live, and can't wait to see what improvements the next-gen of Live makes

PERFECT DARK ZERO

It could well be the perfect next-gen FPS. We speak to Rare to find out why...

lanned as a prequel to the original Perfect Dark Zero, Joanna's Xbox debut has come a long way in the last five years. To dig deeper into PDZ, we spoke with Rare's Duncan Botwood, lead multiplayer designer for the game.

X360: WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU BEGAN WORK ON PDZ?

much more we can do on this new machine!"

– that machine being the Nintendo GameCube.
Then Rare became part of Microsoft Game
Studios, and we got to work on the Xbox,
where there was even more we could do.

X360: IS IT HARD TO DEVELOP THE FRANCHISE FIVE YEARS ON?

consider in terms of the way the PD universe can reach people now than there was five years ago. At the time we had the promo websites and that was about it. Now we've got loads more ideas on the table for expanding and developing Perfect Dark. It's going to be a lot more work, but we think it's worthwhile.

X360: ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT UPSETTING THE FANS?

could end up worrying about every innovation you're trying to put in that changes the game slightly from what the fans were used to. But we think they'll embrace the changes and revel in the familiarity of the things that haven't.

X360: HOW DIFFERENT IS JOANNA AS A PREQUEL CHARACTER?

BOTTMEN: Joanna is younger and less in control of herself. She's got lessons to learn.

X360: IS IT HARD TO MELD THIRD-AND FIRST-PERSON GAMEPLAY?

were designed not to be too intrusive. We experimented early on with a player-switchable camera, first- to third-person whenever you wanted. In the end, we decided to go with the first-person camera as the primary view, but some of the third-person elements were too good to let go so we kept them in...

X360: HOW WILL THE ONLINE SIDE OF THE GAME DEVELOP?

BOTWOOD: Players will be able to join

matches in progress, but only Unranked matches, and only if the game owner has allowed it. In an Unranked match any set-up can be played, but the Ranked matches will be based off the default options. This means that there will be *PDZ* games for everyone online.

X360: CAN YOU EXPLAIN SOME OF THE CUSTOMISATION OPTIONS?

anything goes. In a typical unranked game, anything goes. In an unranked DeathMatch, for example, you'd be able to set up a two-team game where everyone starts in a random location with a shotgun, and the only weapons on the map are rocket launchers, and where other players on Live could join in whenever they wanted; or you could set up a match where the only weapons are grenades, the teams spawn in their safe rooms and teleport out to the team base areas on the main map.

X360: DO YOU SEE A PROBLEM WITH LICENSING OR CENSORSHIP?

ROTWOOD: You'll have to ask Microsoft specifically, but they have lots of experience with the Xbox Live service and have taken steps to ensure it's a safe and secure community.

Joanna is less in control. She's got lessons to learn

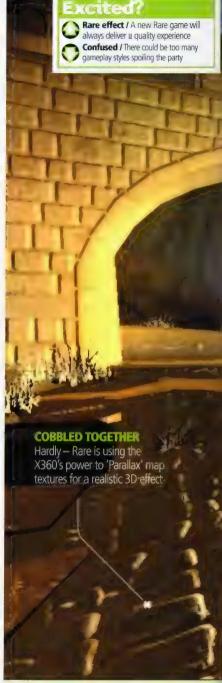
X360: FINALLY, WILL WE SEE JOANNA AT LAUNCH?

BOTWOOD: She'll arrive this Christmas 2005! That's all I can say...

FACT: There's been a lot of speculation over the use of the Live camera in PDZ. It now seems Microsoft has snuffed the idea, as it doesn't want players shooting "real" people.









As you can see from this screen, the multiplayer action resembles Halo's frantic fragging



LAID BARE / Some new ideas are being implemented in the game, such as this X-ray visor. Impressively, every bone in a character is animated separately for heightened realism

TAKE COVER / A third-person perspective will allow you to gain a wider view of the action, handy for playing with some serious stealth, rather than going for all-out (and possibly suicidal) guts 'n' glory



DER SCROLLS IV:

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ 2K Games

Developer/ **Bethesda** Genre/ RPG

Players/ 1 Xbox Live? / No

Briefly

Do anything go anywhere and be anyone in Bethesda's stunning follow-up to the RPG classic Morrowind

IN THE PIE

Elder Scrolls offers...

- Unrivalled freedom Great looks
- _ Incredible depth No ending



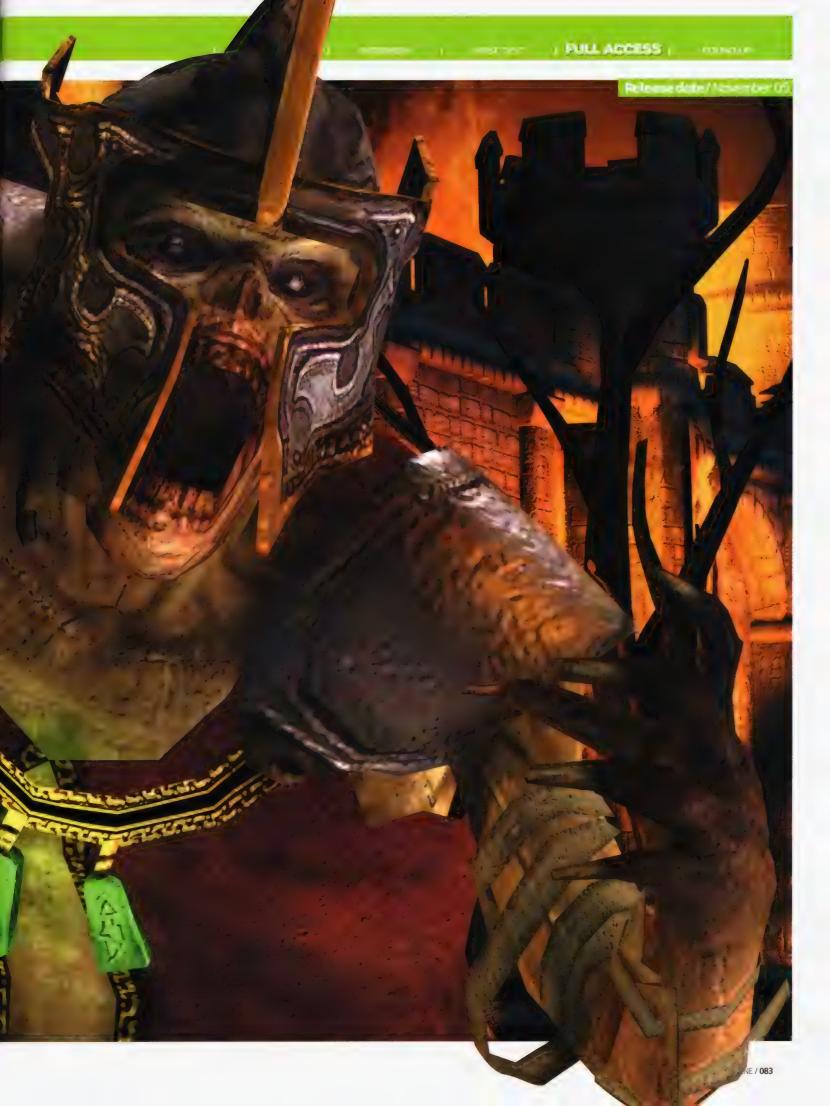
This is the final word in fantasy

orrowind was one of the Xbox's most unlikely successes. A free form fantasy game where you were let loose to do whatever you want. While most veterans of PC role-playing games were fretting over how to best make their ideas work on consoles, and making all manner of compromises, Bethesda just lobbed the whole thing on there, sat back and prayed. And it worked. It's a game which even now, years. after release, is still on Blockbuster's US Xbox

Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion is the sequel and, else and about eight hundred times as large. In a "My Dad Is Bigger Than Your Dad" competition, Oblivion is ten feet tall, ten feet wide and has fists the size of sofas. It's big.

However, while the game's undiluted nature was most of its appeal, a few of the transferred to the world of consoles. Hell, they seemed insane even on PC, if you stopped to even think about them for a second. They've been corrected this time. For example, in Morrowind's combat, when you pressed the button to swing your sword, whether you actually hit or damaged the target wasn't related to whether the sword passed through the opposition. Instead, the little computer brain rolled little imaginary computer dice; compared it to your statistics and decided whether or not the blow connected. However, no matter the result, the animation of the sword passed through the monster. Which, for people trained by the Soul Caliburs of this world, just looked odd. In fact, most folk just assumed that the game was broken in some way: "My sword just went straight through him and nothing happened!

Things are a bit more naturalistic now. Put simply, if the sword hits, the blow hits. The effect of the statistics is moved from whether you hit to how hard you hit, with the strength or lack of your skills leading to more or less damage. Use a weapon type that you have:



virtually no knowledge of, and you could be hacking all day. It's far better to pick up something you have more of a clue about, then show 'em who's king bad-ass in this mythical kingdom. In terms of melee, there's also blocking with swords and shields to prevent you dying embarrassingly when some uncouth orc tries to put his axe in your brain.

Also, Power Moves. Four of these are available, linked to the direction you're pressing when you're activating the attack. As well as having a primary Very Hard Whack use, each different one has a secondary effect, such as trying to break an opponent's shield to leave them, erm, without a shield. Obviously.

But while it's these mechanics that will make *Oblivion* work, it's not why we come over terribly flustered whenever we hear its name. If you wanted to pick a single element of *Oblivion* that separates it from all the competition, it would be its ground-breaking use of artificial intelligence. Rather than making computer characters just react to a player's actions, each has their own desires and aims that they want to satisfy, and then works out the best way to achieve them.

When asked, Bethesda demonstrated a condensed version of what could happen in the game. We see a woman, living alone in a house. She gets her bow and starts to practice, wanting to improve her skills. That is, she wants

It's like nothing else, and about eight hundred times as large to hit the target. That's her first aim. Sadly, that aim isn't true; her skills are not up to scratch.

Frustrated, she goes and gets one of her magical potions and drinks it, improving her skills to the point where she's able to send those shafts slamming home. Happier, she sits down and starts to read – her next objective. However, she can't concentrate as her dog's making an absolute racket. Having had enough, she heads to her third objective. That is, going to bed... but that damn dog just won't shut up. She gets up and lobs a fireball at the poor hound, sending it yelping away. Finally – sweet, sweet sleep.

Talking tactics

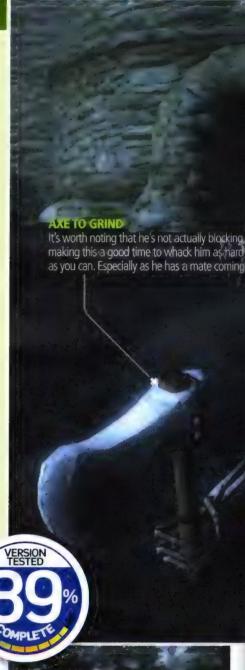
In terms of how this will actually work in the game, Bethesda gives the example of you receiving a mission from the Thieves' Guild to steal a valuable diamond, currently in the possession of someone else. Now, how to do this? Well, if you watch, you see that your target regularly leaves the house to complete certain goals, like shopping or going to church. Timing it correctly, you get into his house to see if he's left the diamond there. However, if it's really that valuable to him, he may have taken it with him. Now, a mugging is one option - but another is to steal everything else in his house. Left without worldly wealth, he'll likely head down the shops, and sell the diamond to a merchant, just to survive. Then you could change your target to the easier merchant...

The possibilities are dizzying. As is the potential for it to go entirely wrong. To this end, Bethesda claims that rather than doing the industry-standard method of concentrating on the bug-testing as the game approaches completion, they've been having QA staff and bug-fixers running the game through its complicated paces for the last two years. This is entirely necessary if you want to release a

DUNGEON

A life sentence

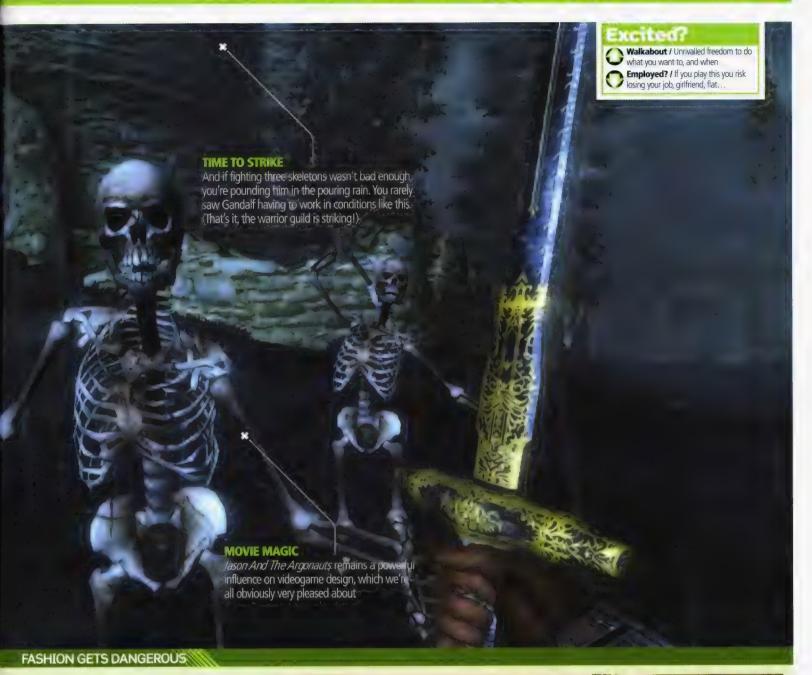
Don't be fooled by the first-person viewpoint: this isn't a new Hexen. Every attack you launch will be calculated by the computer, and your hit rated, just like it would in a table-top RPG. This means you will have to spend a huge amount of time in the game developing your warrior in order to beat foes like those to your left.







CHIECHAY / Every character you meet in the game will have something to say for themselves, so it's always worth being social



The Oblivion collection

Is mithril the new black?

It's not just saving the world — it's looking good while doing it that really matters. This is a game that's set on having your character explore the world, and there's all the expected character design functions needed to allow exactly the look you want for monsterbashing. However, you'll find that as you actually play, you'll want to get

yourself a seasonal wardrobe. Ideally, a magical one too. The very best armours in the game have a highly distinctive look, and the owning of a complete set secures bragging rights among your ex-Morrowind mates.

The Dwarven armour is a relic from this lost race. It's utterly bizarre.



PREVIEW



You can't go anywhere without a union card...

While Warriors get first dibs in dressing like doublehard bastards, everyone else can eventually join in

the joys of chainmail chaffing, since there are no real class limitations. However, only the Warrior cast will be able to perfect using chainmail, and will manage this quicker than an amateur.

To become a

Mage you will need to enlist in college and undertake a series of exams.

It's studious work, but the end results enable you to control the elements via big hulks of rock, like the one pictured.

You'd imagine the Dark Brotherhood would live in a place like this. Maybe you're right, but if we told you, we'd have to kill you. Clearly, by living in the middle of nowhere and putting the frighteners on wandering travellers, these characters are hard to get in with. But persistence is rewarded by being evil in a fight and getting to dress in black leather.





game of this complexity in a solid state, as even small errors can extrapolate out into large, unwanted consequences. For example, at one stage in playtesting there was an area where the humble deer that trotted about the place weren't flagged as animals, leading to any player that killed one for food being hunted as a murderer!

Even without the ambitious nature of this game's Artificial Intelligence, there's still a phenomenal amount for the developers to worry about going wrong. You know how some games are simple, linear things, which you're forced to play through in one way? Well, *Oblivion* is as far from that as it's possible to get. It's not just that it's an enormous world where you're free to explore and be adventurous. It's not even that you can explore it in any order. What it is, like *Morrowind*, is that the person that you become in these adventures can vary quite phenomenally.

With Oblivion, Bethesda isn't selling a game, but an entire world

STORE COLD / Every inch of the Elder Scrolls universe has been painstakingly mapped out. Even the bits you'll never visit





House and garden

As we said earlier, and will continue to say, playing Fider Scrolls is an experience like no other. As you set about developing your on-screen hero, the strangest things can turn to your advantage. Even a spot of gardening will train you in some deadly skill or other - violent weeding, perhaps.

You can walk anywhere

around here. (Just over that

bridge is a great little pub)







While you're given an array of character classes to choose from to begin with - from Thief to Warrior to Mage, as well as some less classical options – this doesn't really hint at the expanse of options available. Rather than being actual classes, these are just sets of skills, and you're free to edit what each character starts with. For example, with the basic Thief set-up, you may decide that rather than having lock-picking as one of his major skills, he'll have magical talents that enable him to do similar feats. And even then, as the game progresses, you're able to gain skills in any area. While only practising the originally chosen seven skills will allow you to increase level, and so get points to spend on your physical statistics, it doesn't stop you grinding away on lesser talents. It's worth noting that "practising" means exactly that. As in Morrowind, rather than gaining skills via artificial skill points to be distributed once you go up a level, you improve with practice.

Thrills and skills

As your skills climb from zero to 100, you pass through the five stages of novice, apprentice, journeyman, expert and master. The higher ones unlock the best of the abilities, even in seemingly innocuous choices. So, while a novice merchant is limited to being scammed by the penny-pinching shopkeepers, a master is able to wander up to

literally any NPC in the game and trade with them, like walking up to someone in the street and offering them £15 for their shoes.

Another good example is Alchemy. Ingredients litter the landscape and can be scavenged from certain monsters. Each has four possible uses, but when you first start to study, you'll probably only know one. As your experience increases - by studying and consuming bits of what you find (er... don't try this one at home, please) - you learn increasingly more. This is an advantage, as to make a potion you need two ingredients with an identical effect. The more options you have, the guicker you can make them. If you know all four, you're a MacGyver of the Elder Scrolls' world's assorted detritus, able to make anti-troll poison-potion from just a bit of mud and six inches of string.

And... oh, six pages are over already? Oblivion is a game of such scope that we could have almost devoted the entire issue to examining its various aspects and still not have exhausted its possibilities. With Oblivion, Bethesda isn't really selling you a game, it's selling you an entire world. And writing about it doesn't need an article in a magazine, but a whole tourist's guide-book. We'll be booking our flight today - via Virgin's new Dragon Air service, natch. KIERON GILLEN

FACT: Hollywood is queuing up to appear in this game – top of the A-list is Star Trek and X-Men slaphead superstar Patrick Stewart



HOW'S IT LOOKING? Awesome, basically. It offers more game-per pound than anything else Even after completing the main quest, there are still masses of dungeons to explore

PREVIEW





SUIT YOU / Crow may dress like a banker, but he has all the skills of Jet Li when it comes to tackling the enemy head on

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Namco Developer/ In-house Genre/ Adventure Players/ 1 Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly If the idea of

If the idea of playing Eidos
Hitman in a near future setting gets your goat, then keep an eye on this anime inspired adventure

IN THE PIE

What Frame City - Killer is stuffed with.

Patrick Swayze
Anime style
Mafia cliches

Scanning (STA)

FRAME CITY KILLER

Namco has something to crow about...

t this year's Los Angeles E3 trade show we had all but given this one the kiss-off. It looked unremarkable. Current-gen even. Its lead character ambled through the streets of Frame City with all the finesse of a speed-walking Johnny Vegas.

This all changed recently, when Namco offered up some new images of the game in action and we were impressed. The city now looks alive. Not alive in an every-character-hasthe-same-shirt kind of way, but in the sense of being truly varied. The streets are now seething with shoppers, and the casinos and bars packed with innocents unaware of the war to come.

The shouldn't come as much of a surprise, since Namco revealed the game is running on the Unreal Engine 3, and is pushing the technology's normal mapping and physics capabilities to the limits.

There is a need for such detail. As the lead character Crow (a futuristic cross between Patrick Swayze and Don Johnson), you will be on the trail of members of well-guarded crime

families. Your job is to assassinate these heavies while remaining on the 'down low'. The fact the Frame City crowds are genuinely unique, and the streets rammed with people, will affect the gameplay in many ways. Searching for targets should be a real challenge, while using the crowds for cover will work to your advantage. This will clearly make the game's age-old GTA mission structure feel fresh, as tailing targets in a real milling throng will become a greater challenge.

As this is next-gen, you are able to go anywhere, do anything and at any time in order to make your hits. The skies will cloud

Crow has all the brutal moves of a Japanese anti-hero



Make the best hit

The free-roaming nature of Frame City Killer is there for one simple purpose: to make each hit a personal mission. You will need to track a target through the city streets, using any vehicle that comes to hand, in a game of cat and mouse with the unlucky soon-to-be dead sap.





Multi-windowing is the new anti-aliasing

Xbox 360's

unique windowing technology allows you to access information vital to a mission's success.

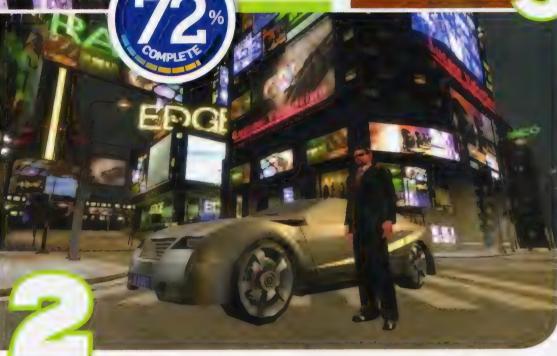
A crowded room or street can be parted in seconds as Crow looks out for targets.

A second function of the scan allows you to identify security systems laying in

wait to snare Crow. The FPS mode highlights any beam traps in the area and will light them up.

Finally, functions

aside, the technique just looks damn good. The multiwindowing may not be as extravagant as seen in Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter, but it will become invaluable when planning a hit on a guarded boss.



and rain, part and spread sunshine; day will turn to night; and the streets will clear of pedestrians and traffic at particular times. Unlike many other free-roaming adventures, GTA included, this is all relevant to the gameplay, as you will be able to take out your mark at the time of your choosing, tailing them to discover the appropriate moment to strike.

In order to gather information on a target, you will need to scan the crowds for clues as to who is armed and dangerous and who is just nipping out for a quick fag. This is where the game picks up some style points and comes into its own, the screen flicks to over-theshoulder mode and you get the chance to scan a crowd, zooming in on highlighted targets before accessing a database of mugshots and character profiles. The more you know about the mark, the easier it will be to find their weak-spot - that regular trip to the unguarded lav after a hefty pasta lunch will be the death of many a mob boss.

If you are spotted, of course, things will get more difficult. Whether Namco is building in a strong Al system to respond to the assassinations is unclear - will the opposing gangs and criminal families, for example, think their rivals are behind your surgical work with a sniper rifle? Rest assured, though: when Crow does get caught out he has all of the brutal moves you'd associate with a Japanese antihero, including limb-snapping martial arts and

F ON As with Resident Evil 4, this game features an over-the-shoulder camera for when you want to let rip at the desired target



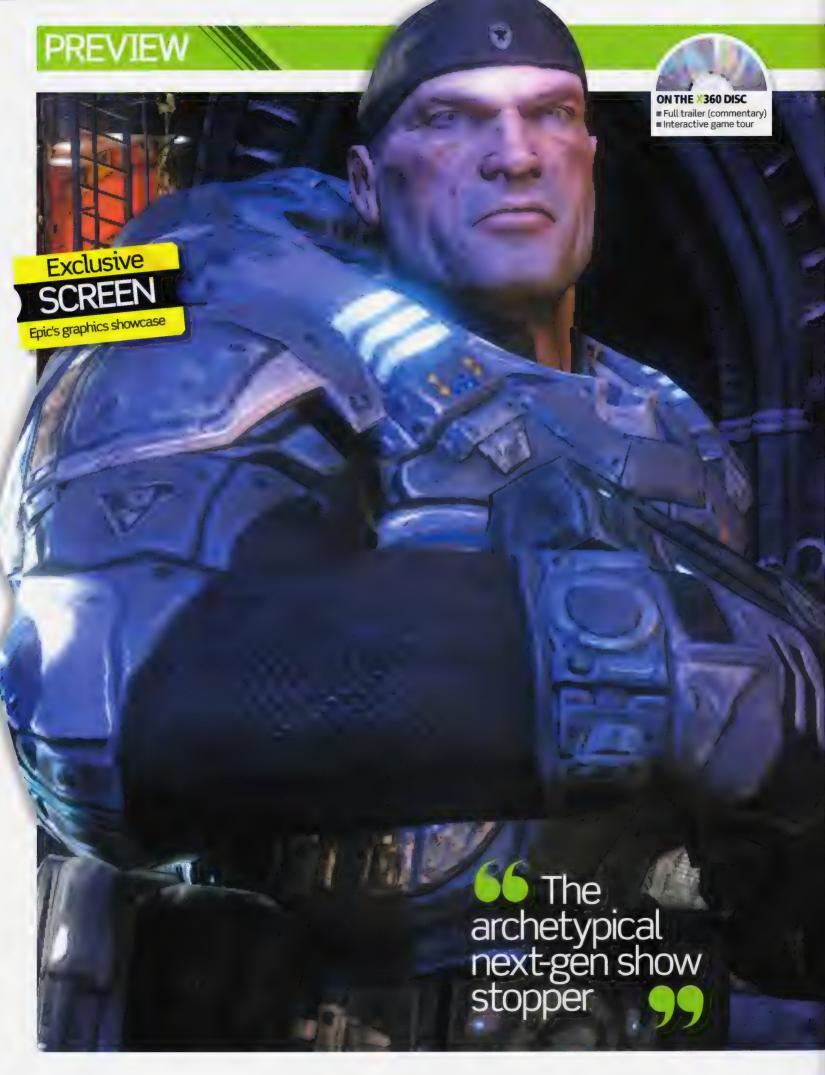
a dual-wielding stance whipped straight from Chow Yun Fat's textbook of film clichés.

Though this side of the game suggests Namco may not steer too far from its traditions, these are minor concerns for a game that has bucked the trend and emerged from being a minor player at this year's E3 to one of the more exciting Japanese launch releases.

lan Dean

FACT: Namco started life making mechanical rocking horses for Disney rides. Then, in 1974, it bought the Japanese arm of Atari and entered into videogame development.









NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

'Mildly interested' would perhaps be a bit more accurate

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

This is the next-gen debut for EA's revitalised Need For Speed franchise, and continues to cruise down the street-racing road of the past two games. This time around the idea is to become the best street racer on the circuit, racing up the police 'most wanted' list to earn yourself kudos. By the time you've finished breaking speed limits in this game, every cop in the virtual city will want a piece of you.

SO, HOW DOES IT PLAY?

The free-roaming idea

behind Underground 2 is continued, with an open city and makeshift races entered as and when you feel like challenging a fellow speed bandit. The separate disciplines of the past series - drag, circuit and open races - have been combined together, for example. To get a good start you will need the swift clutch changes found in the drag discipline.

POLISH RUBBED INTO THIS RACER?

looks solid and stylish, it really doesn't have the

constabulary, until eventually there will be up to 12 police IS EA'S USUAL cars at a time looking to bust you. However, the game features more influences than past Need Not quite. While the game For Speed titles. A quick play of the demo this summer revealed touches of Burnout 3 creeping into the races as you will need to make use of obstacles - such

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

as tanker lorries - to sucker the chasing cars into crashing.

same kind of next-gen

privy to with Gotham

looks we've recently been

Racing 3. However, given

that you are able to drive

anywhere within the city,

the slightly shady visuals

IS IT ALL ABOUT

Racing illegally will catch

can be overlooked.

THE CHASE?

the eye of the local

Fans of the series will lap this up, but with games like Gotham 3 on the radar, there will be stiff

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ EA Developer/ In-house Genre/ Racing Players/ 1-8 Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

free-roaming illegal street racing (Thought so)

IN THE PIE

Under NFS Most
Wanted's bonnet... Boy racer

Next-gen looks OriginalityStreet attitude

TIGER WOODS PGA 2006

Proud to have small balls

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ November 2005 Publisher/ EA Developer/ In-house Genre/ Sports Players/ 1-4 Xbox Live? / Yes

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM PGA 2005?

The most noticeable difference is with the graphics; watching this game is truly breathtaking. We saw the Saw Grass Island Hole map being swung through, and it was stunning. The leaves and grass sway in the breeze, the pond water ripples as fish jump and swim. The light diffuses through the tree branches making everything on screen feel solid and real to the touch.

SO IT'S JUST PRETTIER?

Not guite. We're constantly being told the next step forward isn't in graphics but in physics, and this is where Tiger Woods proves the programmers right. The game's characters and maps have been created down to the smallest bones in a golfer's hands to allow for accurate grip and movement. Place an advanced physics engine into this world and you will have nearlimitless scope to develop your own swing and stance, or try to imitate Tiger's new moves.

HOW IS GAMEPLAY DIFFERENT?

In Tiger 06, both left and right analogue sticks will be used to create the swing. The left controls the swing and the right the impact on the ball: swing governs the tempo and power of a shot, while impact dictates the spin of the ball. All of these are determined by an increased number of physics calculations spun on the fly by Xbox 360's powerful processor.

CAN IT TAKE THE PARTY ONLINE?

Tiger 06 will support four-player Live game modes, including persistent scoreboards to record your performances, a feature that should also be available to Live Silver users.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

A new control system and amazing graphics will have fans drooling, and may even entice a few non-swingers into the fun.





competition for EA's boy racer come launch.



TOP SPIN 2

Now with added nipples

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ November 2005 Publisher/ 2K Games Developer/ PAM Development Genre/ Sports Players/ 1-4 Xbox Live? / Yes

IT HAS NIPPLES?

It's true. Top Spin 2 has the first next-gen nipples. Well, that's the story doing the rounds from a developer busily trying to ratchet up interest in a game many overlooked on the Xbox. The character models have been created with such detail as to have even rendered Sharapova's nipples beneath her shirt. Of course, the freckles and fine hairs on other players have been rendered too.

ARE THEY TRYING TO HIDE **SOMETHING THEN?**

Why, of course. In fact next-gen nips aside, Top Spin 2 doesn't outperform the forthcoming Xbox version in too many ways. Both games will be running at 30 frames per second - when we would expect 60fps from the port - and both play identically to the original Top Spin. It could be argued that the nipples are the only thrills to be expected.

BUT THE ORIGINAL WAS PRETTY GOOD, THOUGH?

Well yes. In fact, it was the best tennis game this side of Virtua Tennis 2, and for many it even surpassed Sega's classic. The balance of player styles and total control over shots proved too addictive for many old-school gamers. With this in mind, Top Spin 2 will feature the same controls, giving full access to lobs, drops, drives and chip shots. 2K Games is promising to implement a new 'high risk shot' feature, though, to spice up the traditional action.

HOW DOES IT USE XBOX 360?

Though on the court this plays very traditionally, off court there will be a number of X360 specific features, including the ability to totally customise your hard hitter. Whether you want to alter hairstyles, create shirts, shorts and sweatbands or design new courts, Top Spin 2 will enable you to do it. Then, of course, you can take your creations online.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

The series' track record suggests this will be a playable tennis sim. We'd just like to see a little more next-gen oomph...

NBA 2K6

Let's bounce...

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ Dec 2005 Publisher/ 2K Games Developer/ Visual Concepts Genre/ Sports Players/ 1-2 Xbox Live?/ Yes

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Yes, it's basketball and yes, it's true that you probably don't like basketball. However, rather than dismiss this particular basketball game simply because it's based on a sport that generates as much excitement on these shores as a plate of cold chips, there's some good news. Ever since the dawn of time (read: since NBA Jam), basketball games have gone with the now expected 'hold shoot to jump, release to shoot' technique. Instead of going down this route, NBA 2K6 will use the right analogue stick, allowing you to push the stick to jump and release to shoot the ball. Hence the reason the right analogue stick has been renamed 'Shot Stick'

AND?

Admittedly, it doesn't sound like the most impressive feature, ranking alongside "it has unlockable artwork!" in the general arousal stakes. However, what this feature will do is allow you to play the type of shot you want just by the way you point the analogue stick. For example, you

can perform lay-ups from the left or right side of the basket, replicating the NBA when players decide where to shoot at the last minute. Basically, it lets you show off. As we all know, showing off is good.

HOW ELSE CAN YOU SHOW OFF?

By dunking. There's also an Aggressive button and, when used in conjunction with the Shot Stick, it means you can create your own dunks. The most obvious example is an X360 twirl on the Shot Stick translates to an X360 dunk. You can experiment with different presses and see how it changes depending on where you are positioned on the court.

AND THE MUSIC?

The soundtrack for NBA 2K6 will be composed of the usual hip-hop nonsense, which is great news if you're a fan of The Roots (who?), Common (what?) and RJD2 (why?). Still, every track here is original and exclusive to NBA 2K6, and there's an apparent tour in the works as well. Cute, if you like that sort of thing

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

The best basketball series out there looks set to continue its good form. Just leave your preconceptions at home.





THE GODFATHER

You too can be a wise guy

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ March 2006 Publisher/ EA Developer/ In-house Genre/ Adventure Players/ 1 Xbox Live? / No

IS THIS THE MOST AMBITIOUS XBOX 360 GAME?

To be blunt, no. It is, however, EA's most ambitious game to date. The US megapublisher has seen the success of GTA and wants a piece of the non-linear adventure pie. Tag a hefty licence onto the GTA gameplay and you have a winner, or so EA has assumed. The problem is, The Godfather licence comes with a lot of baggage, which has meant this offer won't be made until Spring 2006.

WHAT'S THIS BAGGAGE ABOUT?

The Godfather is possibly the biggest cultural licence you could imagine. Even if you haven't seen Coppola's films or read Mario Puzo's book, you will be familiar with the savings and mythos of the series. So to create a non-linear game inside this strict licence would require some serious game design – every action you take affects the three families in different ways, and so changes how the game plays and ends.

SO IT'S ALL ABOUT FREEDOM?

Definitely. The basic principal of the game is to develop your character as you strive to rise through the ranks of the Mafia to become the Godfather. You can choose your side, make and break deals, date family members and assassinate rivals. We're promised different ways to complete each mission, suggesting violent and diplomatic routes to success.

HOW DIFFERENT WILL IT BE TO THE XBOX VERSION?

So far, EA has only stated how the look of the game will change, with higher definition models and graphical effects, such as diffused lighting, which are used to create more realistic events. The aim is to create characters with believable emotional responses to your actions - pummel a guy and you will believe he has been scared into giving up the juice on a rival.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

There's some question over how this will stand up to proper X360 games like Elder Scrolls, but we're willing to give it a shot.

GAMES ON THE VERGE OF THE BIG TIME. COULD THEY CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER?

X360

TOP TEN PRE-ORDERED LAUNCH GAMES

- **01** Quake 4
- 02 Project Gotham Racing 3
- 03 Call Of Duty 2
- 04 Dead Or Alive 4
- 05 Ghost Recon 3
- 06 Need For Speed Most Wanted
- 07 Perfect Dark Zero
- 08 King Kong
- 09 Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
- 10 Condemned

Killer next-gen developer seeks publisher for fun and frolics...

2 DAYS TO VEGAS

LOWDOWN: Rumoured to be in talks with Sega to publish this 24inspired adventure, Steel Monkeys' past games include Master Rallye and Rocky. Packed with car chases, free roaming gameplay across America's Midwest, and parking attendants, this is one crime adventure that could truly rival GTA.



EXPECTATIONS

What will the world be like in three months? (What? You're asking us? We don't know what we're having for tea tonight! But we can predict the make up of your games collection from current pre-orders.)



you've ever played Virtua

Fighter, you'll know this series is more than a holiday romance. But like a quick fumble in a rusty rowboat, the teaser trailer from this year's E3

has left a lasting impression. The trailer showed incredibly detailed and lifelike character models, with accurately flowing hair and draped dresses. Though the moves each character went through didn't appear to be theirs from previous games, the fanboy in us just gawped - and assumed that there was a deeper purpose behind mixing up the fighter's styles.

EMPET PELEASE: NOVEMBER 06













CONDEMNED

Sega's debut nextgen bloodfest is shaping up nicely, and could be one of the forgotten greats in the launch-day melee.

SCARFACE

2 Delayed until next summer to spruce things up, Vivendi's Pacino *Driver*-wannabe could offer relief from the pack of shooters on offer.

FULL AUTO

3 Sega's guns 'n' cars modding racer may be as cynical as you like, but from early play tests, it's damn good fun (in a curled lip kind of way).

WORLD AIR FORCE

Namco keeps on giving, and this hotshot aerial sim has the potential to make us all feel like Iceman.

KAMEO

5 She's been running from her release She's been running date for nearly five years, but now Kameo needs to show her face. Finally, we get to play Kameo.



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here's more to Sega than Sonic.
That's the message coming loud and clear from gaming's famous blue corner. It's not an overblown declaration designed to whip the rabid fanbase into delirium.
Rather, it's a statement of intent, as Sega reloads and realigns itself for the Xbox 360 launch, getting ready to put right some

past wrongs, leaving behind its last-gen naval-gazing, and shaking up its image in the process. While the next generation of consoles will still be treated to the classic image of a cheery blue hedgehog tapping his foot impatiently waiting for your next move, Xbox 360 also has blood-splattered thugs trying to carve you up in slash-horror Condemned, not giving you the luxury of a next move. From collecting rings to collecting players for your Dream Team in Football Manager 2006, from racing through levels to racing through cities in Full Auto, blowing up a petrol station or two on the way, Sega is changing – and Xbox 360 owners will be the first to see the transformation take place...

Rewind. Quick history lesson. Sega's past has been repeated ad nauseam to the point where it's almost common gaming knowledge, but to summarise

the chewed-up clichés in a bite-size sentence: Sega battled with Nintendo during the mid-Nineties, but subsequent consoles flopped, and Sega took a deep breath and withdrew from the hardware race to lick its wounds. An awkward transitional phase followed, as Sega had to learn how to make games for hardware babies other than its own. For every *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution*, there was a *SpikeOut: Battle Street*. For every *Panzer Dragoon Saga*, there was a *Sonic Heroes*. Then Sammy merged with Sega and squashed its subsidiary companies, such as AM2 and Amusement Vision, into one whole. Miserable internet cynics predicted doom and gloom.

Fast forward to the present. The Sammy merger wasn't to be Sega's epitaph, merely a thorny ending to one of the toughest chapters in the company's history. Now, finally having adapted to making toys for hardware babies other than its own, Sega is ready for Xbox 360. Those familiar with Sega will know that its games are typically those that wouldn't look out of place in the arcade – rammed with sugary colour, noisier than X-Factor auditions and built with an extra credit mentality in mind. Enter, stage left: Condemned, a survival horror game featuring blood, bleached colours and a downbeat, sombre mood. This is as far away from Sega's roots as it can possibly







YUJI MAKA



Yuji Naka. Sonic The Hedgehog. NiGHTS Into Dreams. Phantasy Star Online. It's not a bad gaming CV by any means, and with Xbox 360 on the way, Yuji Naka is working overtime to add more games to it...

In fact, he's adding *Sonic The Hedgehog Next-Gen* to his long list of achievements. The new game will be released later next year to coincide with *Sonic's* 15th anniversary. The aim of the project is simple: make it fast. Make it the fastest game anyone has ever seen. This will be achieved using the latest technology, courtesy of Microsoft, and Naka's gift for combining art, physics and cutting edge game design.

So, with a new next-gen Sonic just around the corner we thought it only fair to ask the man in the know what's what. Here's Yuji Naka...

X360: What is your philosophy on gaming, and how do you see this translating to this next-generation of consoles?

Naka: With each new generation of console, I strive to achieve technical innovation. I am always excited by the opportunity to match the level of quality that each one introduces.

X360: What can we expect from yourself and Sega for this new generation of games?

Naka: I expect new consoles to have new features such as graphics and

new operational techniques, but we are always looking to create new gaming styles, which is very important.

X360: What direction do you see games and gameplaying going in the HD era?

Naka: I believe most of the games and gameplay techniques are moving towards creating a more realistic gaming world. However, we're still interested in creating more fantasy worlds as well.

X360: Do you think it is easy to get caught up in the technology and forget the gameplay?

Naka: No, I don't think so. It is not like the developers should have to focus on either story or technology, separately. We should focus on what will best present the game, and that's about using the technology or a story as an advantage. It just depends on the game.

X360: Did you anticipate the excitement that the new version of *Sonic* would cause amongst the gaming community?

Naka: No. I am surprised and pleased that it caused such excitement. I hope many people are looking forward to seeing the quality we've been able to achieve.

X360: How do you think Japan will take to Xbox this time around? **Naka:** I believe it is capable of success in Japan as well. I'm well aware that other publishers have also great software for the console, not just Sega.

X360: What do you think of online gaming? **Naka:** Online gaming

is fun — we've realised this through working with *Phantasy Star Online* for five years. On the other hand, games like the new *Phantasy Star* game, *Phantasy Star Universe*, illustrate that this kind of game can be fascinating in single-player, too. Regarding Xbox Live games, I am looking forward to the future.

X360: Do you welcome the new direction of gaming? Placing consoles at the heart of a family's entertainment?

Naka: I don't think the direction has changed dramatically. Overall, I think the direction of gaming is more of a focus on the visual, but I hope developers will look at progression of control methods as well. It is nice that games are being considered as being at the heart of family entertainment. I hope everyone can enjoy games like they do movies.

X360: Are there any limitations to developing for this next-generation, such as cost and time?

Naka: Yes. Generally speaking, cost and time is a big factor. We do have the benefit of size that enables us to pool resources by creating our own library of tools to allow us to be efficient in this area.

X360: Finally, if you could make one game for the next-generation of consoles, what would it be?

Naka: It is always my wish to create something that doesn't take time or cost too much, but if I were to create something irrespective of time and cost, I would say I would like to create a new type of game that needs to have new peripherals.

















t's a rare thing for a videogame to make you jump, but this grisly little beast from Monolith does just that. We visited Sega this month to play the game, entering the home of Sonic feeling confident, and leaving questioning many things, including the capacity of the human heart to take the stress of being stalked in dark corridors for hours on end. Yeah, that's right, we jumped out of our 'GAMER' T-shirts, but we're comfortable with our limits.

It's in its ability to make players freak like horny dogs that *Condemned* will succeed. Let's make no mistakes here: this game is shocking. The plot alone places you on the edge — you stand in the off-the-rail suit of an FBI veteran on the hunt for a serial killer who has warped the minds of fellow dropouts to form an underground army of sadistic thugs. To capture the killer you will need to venture deep into his world, collect clues using FBI gadgetry and bounce attackers off the walls with anything that comes to hand. It's like Silence Of The Lambs sharing career advice with Fight Club.

The next reason why Condemned will have you reaching for a light switch is the graphics. Visually, this game pushes the boundaries of taste, as blood splatters from every swing of a pipe or plank, and teeth tear from a thug's face and scatter across the room. The shadows don't help either —Doom 3 has nothing on the stark rooms of Condemned. The fear factor is raised as we're now fighting for our lives in realistic, urban environments as enemies attack from the most mundane of hiding places — literally, from behind the sofa.

The tension isn't simply racked up by the forbidding visual style, though, as however unnerving being chased through rooms and alleys that have a real-life familiarity is, it's the intelligence of the pursuers that makes events scary as hell. A stand-out moment from our play of Condemned came when we were busily examining an apartment kitchen for clues — we spied a thug marching past the window, and seconds later

he returned and peered in. Spotting us rifling through the cutlery draw he ran off, presumably to find the kitchen door and come in.

Well, don't presume anything in Condemned. We waited, meat clever in hand, for the thug to enter; for him to run at us and fall right into our blade. However, he didn't come. Silence. Nothing was moving. We gingerly peeked through the doorway, walked out and poked around for our victim. Unknown to us, the Al character had been lurking behind the doorway all along, waiting for us to come to him and consequently run into his waiting blade. Clever.

The tension is further ramped up when you try to defend yourself. Everything in the game has a sell-by date, meaning a plank will eventually break, and a shotgun will only have the ammo in its chamber: no bonus bullet packs in this game. This affects gameplay greatly, as you will snap a pipe over a killer's head and need to quickly scour the shadows for a new weapon - an axe, a book shelf, a spade, anything. The result is a constant need to defend oneself using the objects to hand. You will never feel comfortable in Condemned - the game just won't let you rest.

So: creepy story, claustrophobic graphics, nasty Al and realistic weapon degradation. *Condemned* has all the ingredients of a killer game, and we mean that quite literally... Don't let your gran play this one!









SPOOKED / Condemned has to be the most terrifying game we've played on Xbox 360, bar none

STUDIO FOCUS

Monolith

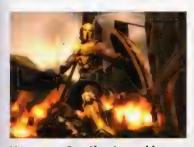
Sega's new stablemate is a PC veteran immersed in the FPS genre. The studio began as a Microsoft partner, developing DOS-based games using its own LithTech propriety engine back in 1994. After expanding, the studio was then bought by Warner Bros. in 2004 and started focusing on developing third-party games for the likes of Sega, Vivendi and Microsoft.

KEY TITLES

- No One Lives Forever
- Alien Vs Predator 2
- The Matrix Online

STUDIO FOCUS

Sega dons its Union Jack underpants as the Japanese über-company scours the British Isles for the latest talent...



Name: Game: Spartan: Total Warrior Location: West Sussex, England
Creative Assembly is best known for its huge PC strategy title, Rome: Total War, a game released to critical acclaim and used to power the historical scraps seen in BBC program Time Commanders. Spartan: Total Warrior for Xbox will be its first title published under Sega.



Name: Sports Interactive
Game: Football Manager 2006
Location: North London, England

Known for the PC *Championship Manager* sims that sold more than the Bible, Sports Interactive was snapped up by Sega in February 2004 and started work on the *Football Manager* series. Sports Interactive is planning to expand into more sports management sims under Sega.



Name: Sega Racing Studio Game: Sega Rally 3 Location: Midlands

Sega has constructed a new UK development studio to focus on racing titles, in a location to attract talent from "studios in the south and north of England." Current job vacancy descriptions (and the *Colin McRae* past of Head of Senior Product Development Guy Wilday) point to a next-gen *Sega Rally*.



yo, eschewing bright, bold visuals for a grimy look that takes full advantage of Xbox 360's muscle. If that weren't enough, enter stage right: Full Auto, a vehicle combat game featuring huge explosions and a gentle whiff of car modding about its person. No Magical Sound Shower here, just the noise of rockets fired and resulting explosions. In the middle: a confused audience.

A NEW CHAPTER

It's a surprise, but this change of emphasis makes sense. Sega is turning over a new leaf, and alongside its own IP, it will be using Xbox 360 as the platform to launch the next chapters in its history and broaden its horizons.

Matt Woodley, European Marketing Director of Sega, explains: "We've been expanding our product line-up for the last few years. We want to create a well-rounded portfolio of quality games in each genre and on every platform. Condemned and Full Auto are examples of this. Their mature direction is just an indication that we're not restricting ourselves, and gives us the content we need to appeal to the western market and mature gamers."

Matt continues: "Sega has always stood for excellence and innovation in gaming. We're in a privileged position where we have a wealth of classic IP that we can draw upon when we feel the time is right. Whether it's allnew titles, or titles inspired by past Sega games, we'll be working with the best development talent in the world to bring the best of what Sega has to offer to the gaming world."

ULTIMATE BURNOUT / The thought of Afterburner on Xbox 360 is just too cool. Even with old-school gameplay, this will rule the skies



MONEY TALKS

It hasn't gone unnoticed that Sega has recently gone British, snapping up UK developers to boost its output. The reason for this is that the Japanese economy has been suffering for some time, and without getting all Time magazine and boring you with technical beanpole explanations, the knock-on effect is that the Japanese videogame market is suffering along with it. Less money sloshing around the economy, fewer Japanese games bought, and so fewer games are being made solely for the Japanese market. So Sega has been looking overseas to developers outside of Japan in an attempt to sell more games abroad, and so keep its war chest topped up.

"The UK is just one of our markets that we are focusing on, along with the rest of Europe and America," Woodley explains. "Sega historically released a lot of Japanese-influenced titles, which may not have necessarily appealed to the western market. We are now growing our portfolio of western-style games to appeal to European and US consumers and will continue to do so moving forward. We've got lots more to announce in the future."

The result has been the acquisition of Sports Interactive and Creative Assembly, two of the UK's finest developers. Sports Interactive guided *Championship Manager* to the top of the PC football management pile, while Creative Assembly set retail tills ringing with *Rome: Total War*. Monolith also falls under the Sega banner now, with its first-person-shooter expertise bringing another angle to the publisher's changing line-up. But why is Sega now dealing with football management, historical war and FPS games? Apparently, it's all about going with whatever works.

"When we're working with much-loved local developers like Sports Interactive and Creative Assembly, the consumers are already familiar with these teams. Monolith is also a worldwide respected developer, which again can only help our standing as a publisher as we strive to work with the best in the business."

SUMO STUDIO



Since 2004's universally acclaimed OutRun2 coin-op conversion, Sumo Studio has grown even closer to Sega. The two companies are working tightly on a new secret project due for release next year

that is in no way a new OutRun game. Honest.

X360: Where do you see yourselves fitting into the Sega family of developers?

Cavers: Starting with the easy questions! We value our relationship with Sega very highly at any developer would, and we feel really at home working on IP most of us have grown up with

X360: How are your interpretations going to differ from the originals?

Cavers: This really has to be taken on a case by case basis, and we assess everything on its own ments, We don't have a standard formula for predicting what we're going to be it's more a case of working with the guys at Sega Europe and Sega Japan to develop a direction for the product.

X360: What are the constraints when developing games based around Sega IPs? Cavers: We're not given a list of constraints and told these are the boundaries for the product. It's more about looking at and reviewing the IP to work out where the natural constraints exist, and then working with these to develop something that takes the IP on to the next level for the chosen platform. We certainly don't say "let's reinvent this or that", it's more a case of what are the IP's strengths and how can we leverage these on the target platform?

X360: Are you ever concerned you will alienate the die-hard fans?

Cavers: Obviously we're concerned that we could do this, which is why we try very hard to ensure that the products we develop fit in with the Sega culture and ethos for creating games. If we fail in this respect, then that means we've failed in achieving one of our aims.

X360: How do you foresee some of Sega's classic brands, such as Afterburner and Sonic, making the step-up on the next-

Carvers: We've not really given this much thought, as we've been far too busy working with Sega on other things.

X360: Is there one Sega game you would love to bring to Xbox 360?

Cavers: It would be totally unfair to single out any one game Sega has lots of great IP most of which would work great on the Xbox 360

X360: In real terms, how much of a leap is Xbox to Xbox 360, and what expectations do you have for the hardware?

X360: Sega games have a particular feel and old-school nature to them. How do you see this transferring to next-gen? At the end of the day, aren't people really just after great gameplay?

Cavers: Well yes, people want great gameplay. but they also want to know that the game they're buying for their Xbox 360 makes use of all the technical advancements on the console Else why wouldn't you stick with old tech and great gameplay? Personally, I think gamers buying an Xbox 360 will want both great gameplay and great technology from their games—and rightly so! We'll aim to provide both

X360: OutRun2 was a great conversion. Can we expect a new *OutRun* from your team on Xbox 360? Or is there a new racer in

Cavers: We really enjoyed working on OutRun2 and I think that came through in the end result but as for plans for the Xbox 360, you'd have to ask that question to Sega...



FULL AUTO

Sega's first next-gen racer doesn't even need first gear...

If there's one word that springs to mind with Full Auto (after the words chaotic, noisy and explosive have all been and gone), that word is Burnout. While there are plenty of worse comparisons to throw about, there's always a danger that the staff at Pseudo Interactive won't take kindly to having its baby so casually compared to Criterion's racer, so let's amend the comparison. Full Auto is like Burnout... with weapons.

That doesn't mean Full Auto has an identity crisis. Quite frankly, there's no such thing as an identity crisis when you're being compared to Burnout. In any case, Full Auto is a far more brutal game, putting the emphasis on weapons, with machine guns, rockets, shotguns and grenades making up a small part of the armoury. The press release cliché of "fully destructible environments!" may make you sigh, but this is one of those rare games that actually means what it says. Slam an errant rocket into a petrol station and watch the debris fly. Just to let you revel in those many pornographic explosions, there's even an instant replay button included.

The hook of the racing revolves around an Unwreck meter, allowing you to rewind time if you screw up a corner or, perhaps more appropriately, find yourself on the wrong end of a grenade. Wind back 15 seconds, start again and give yourself a second chance to avoid making the same mistake. The Unwreck meter is built up by scraping the paintwork off other cars, either by slamming into them or using your weapons. If you haven't already noticed, this game will be all about car combat. Essentially, *Full Auto* is like *Burnout*. With weapons. And if that doesn't excite you, then nothing will.



GUN RUNNER / Burnout with guns, anyone? Of course you want it. We've played it, and we still want more



It's a sign of the times that the company that once specialised in bringing Japanese games over to western audiences is now looking to take western games over to Japanese audiences. "If we find that in a developer like Creative Assembly we have titles with potential crossover to Japan, then we will work closely with our Japanese teams to realise that potential," Woodley admits. "Each new market requires a different focus. From my experience, Sega has a unique global way of working. We collaborate on all projects."

A FAITHFUL FOLLOWING

Sega's last console was Dreamcast, a machine that failed to stay afloat when PlayStation2 started making waves, and was effectively dead in the water by the time Xbox hit the shelves. Yet despite withdrawing from the console race in March 2001, Sega still commands a zealous fan base matched only by Nintendo, typically ranging from late teens to older gamers – basically, anyone around to see its glory years. These core fans have already raised concerns that Sega is moving away from its arcade roots. However, this isn't the case.

"No matter what format, it's still about good games with relevant content," says Woodley. "We've worked hard to be innovators in software in the past. New formats dictate that we're required to consistently adapt our focus, which keeps our approach fresh." That will be of some comfort to the hardcore fans, and it's also good to know that following in the tentative footsteps of *OutRun2* and *Phantasy Star Online*, Xbox Live will also be part of the masterplan for future games. "We see Live as a key part of many of our future games," affirms Woodley.

The mixture of old and new can be seen in Sega's current projected line-up. While Condemned, Full Auto and Football Manager 2006 stick out as being 'non-Sega' titles in the traditional sense, there are also arcade versions of Virtua Fighter 5, Afterburner, House Of The Dead 4 and Virtua Tennis 3 on the horizon. Those games are built around simple, easy-to-understand concepts that Sega has become known

for and these games could well end up on console (see Sega Rumour Mill). However, Condemned hasn't just been controversial because it distances itself from Sega's roots. More, the levels of violence have provoked raised eyebrows. Sega insist this isn't a problem: "We know what the boundaries of entertainment and good taste are, so we won't be crossing any lines. Condemned is an adult game for a mature market – we are entertaining in the same way that the film business does."

This leaves Sega in an unusually strong position. The company never quite managed to get its head together in time for the Xbox launch, as it was trying to find its feet making games for other consoles while mourning the Dreamcast. This time, Sega is ready for the challenge of the Xbox 360. As Matt Woodley points out, the key is to adjust to the technology: "The secret of succeeding in today's changing industry is the ability to adapt and push the boundaries of the latest technology. The reason we're still around and still growing is that we're firmly committed to being represented well on each new format, with strong games from the best developers in the world. Gaming hardware should be about emulating the best technology that is currently available, and providing the best base for developers, and that's as much of a motivator as any. Finally I'll say that next-gen is most definitely not just about better graphics...

That's a line of thought shared by Microsoft, as Xbox 360 will serve as a central entertainment system rather than an out-and-out games console. It's something Sega and Microsoft see eye-to-eye on. "We're very excited to be working with Microsoft on this concept," Woodley gushes. "It's a vision we share, and will be pushing the boundaries of in the coming years." In Condemned and Full Auto, Sega has set out its stall as doing something different. This time around, Sega is adapting to gamers rather than waiting for gamers to adapt to them. This is how the Japanese giants managed to find success in the mid-Nineties, and Xbox 360 could be the partner Sega needs to burrow its way towards mainstream success

Welcome back, Sega.

"Microsoft is trailing behind us and is not a threat"

KEN KUTARAGI, SONY

PlayStation daddy Ken Kutaragi easily wins the prize for talking the most nonsense, delivering exceptionally catty lines with stunning regularity.

This man is a menace, and is ceaseless in his quest to generate propaganda capable of tricking people into believing there's actually a massive technological gap between the Xbox 360 and PS3. He even suggested the difference between Xbox 360 and PS3 is the same as the difference between the first PlayStation and the 3DO. Impartial

developers and experts who have evaluated the true abilities of both machines point out the graphical potential of the Xbox 360 is practically the same as PS3, but this doesn't stop Kutaragi's nonsense.

3DO indeed...



"It's how we're going to use the technology that separates us" SHIGERU MIYAMOTO, NINTENDO

There's not a lot I want Ib play now." the legendary Nintendo designer continues, atting a lack of innovation in the industry. "A lot of the games out there are just too long. I want to make more unique products." Cleverly Miyamoto & twisting

Nintendo's thrifty stance and making it seem like the move to make smaller games is something to do with innovation, rather than Nintendo's reluctance to put is hand in its pockets and make the large epic games (such as *Halo*), that people want to blay

4"Sony's plan for PSX did not work. The strategy failed"

REGGIE FILS-AIME, NINTENDO

The ever-evangelical Nintendo executive vice president of sales and marketing is no stranger to shooting his mouth off in the press, to much hilarity.

His point makes a tenuous link between the PSX and PS3's chances of success, based on their ability to deliver extra multimedia functions. The problem is that the PSX failed not because people didn't want multimedia functions, but because they didn't want

to pay a high price for existing PS2 hardware.

be because of the same reasons as the PSX, and the whole world understands this, causing everyone to once again, point and

laugh at the infamous Mr.
Fils-Aime

Game consoles are not an essentia product in life"

SATORU IWATA, NINTENDO

While probably the oddest quote on the list, this perfectly (and tragically) highlights Nintendo's underlying problem: it just doesn't aim high enough, thanks to this belief that videogames aren't that important.

Where Sony and Microsoft believe their multimedia consoles are so desirable they will take over the world and become essential living room devices, Nintendo boss Iwata is convinced consoles are "viewed with hostility by family members" and, as such, he expects Nintendo will have to struggle in order to overcome some kind of resistance.

Such low self-esteem... Nintendo could probably be a dangerous opponent if the company actually believed in itself a bit more.

The day Sony launches, they walk right into Halo 3"

BILL GATES, MICROSOFT

Speaking to *Time* magazine, moneybags himself revealed that Microsoft intends to release *Halo 3* against PS3, a move genuinely capable of hurting PS3's first-day sales.

Sony has already seen the devastating result of such a tactic. In the US, Microsoft launched Halo 2 against Sony's new slimline PS2 hardware and went on to achieve the biggest retail day in entertainment.

Sure, PS3 will be harder to crack, but imagine if Microsoft dropped the Xbox 360's price while releasing the US' most popular franchise



06 "Xbox Live is the world's leading online gaming service

SHANE KIM, MICROSOFT



momentum right new" and a "well proviones. brodies rise the rest president of complex." He makes a good point with the has a coloring to be oning. Microck has a defining advantage by being the current leader in this jump. Also, with the current representation of which he possess Manufact is in a grow potential region the most of the Africa 1925. peaten a list in formation

"We expect

This is the bold claim of ex-Squaresoft senior vice president and current Microsoft Japan boss Yoshihiro Maruyama when talking about how the Xbox 360 will do in Japan. He expects to win. Despite the fact that: Xbox is currently being outsold by pretty much every other system on the shelf.

So how does he think it's going to happen? "This time, as well as launching first, we have focused on designing the machine and the games for the Japanese market," he points out. And he's not wrong. The smaller, sexier design of the Xbox 360, compared with the beast that was the original Xbox, should ensure space-conscious Japanese gamers accept it into their little homes.

"It's indicative of a very deep soul inside the machine"

"Oh dear" were the words we muttered as Allard delivered this prized and now infamous quote. With our heads in our hands and our teeth gritting through the veil of our sour grimace, we didn't know whether to laugh or

cry. A soul? Really? Because of a simple inhaled design gesture? No. Just. no. Let's never speak of this again. J - promise you'll stop this kind of thing. You're not doing anyone any favours,

"We are going to deliver the Zen of gaming"

Again, sat in the crowded venue of Microsoft's pre-E3 Xbox 360 conference, we were forced to tut and grimace as Peter Moore came out with a relentless barrage of nonsensical wonder-lines

"Next-generation games will combine unprecedented audio and visual experiences to create worlds that are beyond real, and they'll deliver storylines and gameplay so compelling that it will feel like living a lucid dream," he told a gobsmacked crowd. "The result is a state where you achieve the perfect mindbody equilibrium as you forget your physical surroundings," he exclaimed, and you become completely immersed in the game itself. This controller becomes an extension of your body, it becomes the gateway to the Zen of gaming." He actually said all this.

O E "Revolution will have no real problem [competing]

GEORGE HARRISON, NINTENDO

Really, Mr Harrison? Are you sure? He could be right, of course - no one yet knows what to make of Revolution, but the way the company seems to always want to veer away from the topic of power and talk about the "revolutionary" controller it still has under wraps, does suggest raw power won't be Revolution's strong point.

BACK CHAT

Have your say on this month's Ten Of The Best

Now, being our first issue and all, there wasn't the chance to get your thoughts on this month's list of the worst things said by corporate heads at the launch of their hardware. So, to kick-off, the X360 team are here to offer their views, starting at the top with lan...

"Well, there are no excuses for coming out and saying we'll all be sucked into the Zen of gaming come November. Sure, Xbox 360 is going to be a serious leap forward, but to proclaim it will alter our state of consciousness is a big promise.

Until we poached him, Ryan had recently been a key staffer on our sister GameCube magazine Cube, so as you might expect he had some words to say about Iwata. "Game consoles are an integral part of life, huh? What, like eating and being polite to waiters? Come on, I'm as hardcore as the next guy, but occasionally I like a break from 24 hour Street Fighter // tournies."

Keith, too, has a shady past. Despite putting in the hours on our other sister mag XBM, he also wrote for a PS2 mag. Here are his thoughts: "It was a little disappointing that Ken and the boys had to come out so bullish. They are, after all, the current Empire in videogaming and hold all the cards. So what if they're second to enter the next-gen market?"

Finally, Jay has his say. "Things are getting a bit too school playground for my liking. I expected a little more from everyone involved. There, I've had my say: all involved should bow their heads, show a little humility and perhaps count to 10 before saying anything else."

Next Have your say on this month's Month Ten Of The Best

and we'll print them in the next issue. Don't hold back.

Send your rants to: backchat@x36omagazine.com

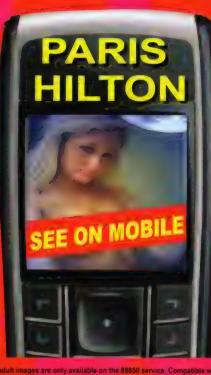
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COMMUNITY **EDITORIAL**

No more droppers, no more corpse humpers, no more pottymouthed French Halo 2 players screaming at you for dropping the flag. Microsoft has implemented a reputation system into Xbox 360's Live service, so you should never run into gameruining pond-life ever again. It might even see a rise of Xbox Live vigilantes, hunting down cheaters and making them cry with Dead Or Alive 4's Kokoro. It's safe to say we love them already.

Just to make sure there's no aggro when Xbox 360 hits the shelves, we'll be setting up regular angst-free matches with all of you anyway. Sim racers, 2D fighters, first-person shooters, whatever takes your fancy, let us know and we'll do it. An entire tournament of Kokoro players to decide the best Kokoro player of them all? We've already got it all worked out. That's still a few months away. In the meantime, whatever you do, don't drop that damn flag...

Ryan, Community **Editor** EMAIL ME!: live@ x360magazine.com



Scoring a kill typically in HPS games

where soldiers would accidentally kill

Ferm originates from Vietnam War

Scrub hunter

WILL and so bump up his own statistics

VIBEOLOGY

Lag tactics

n<mark>ettective, but tend to work when the</mark>

rame-rate goes all S*teamboai. Villia*

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

Identity Crisis?

Online rankings determine Perfect Dark Zero appearance

THERE WAS A bit of a fuss made in the Perfect Dark Zero camp recently after it discovered that your character's skin will be predetermined by online rankings. Every player on each team will have a different 'skin' so there can be no two Joanna Darks on one team.

However, it's the news that your appearance will be determined by your online ranking that's set the cat amongst the pigeons, as only the highest ranking player will get to play



as Joanna Dark and lower ranking players are likely to fill the shoes of the generic character models. On one hand, having appearance determined by rank allows players to instantly spot the better players and allow for more tactical elements. Conversely, players don't like having choice taken away from them. "This is gonna be a pain," moaned one fan on the Perfect Dark forums. "Even if we play for extra hours and play hard, there will always be someone better than us more often than not. This ranking system thing is messed up. I think our character should be a choice."

Still, it's not all bad news for gamers lamenting the chance to ogle their virtual breasts, as it's also been announced that Tor Books has signed a licensing deal with Microsoft to produce three Perfect Dark books. Hurray!



ONLINE HEROICS ONLY ON X360

MARVELLOUS NEWS

Marvel and Microsoft join forces for MMOG

FANS OF MEN in tights will be glad to learn of a licensing agreement between Marvel and Microsoft that will see Xbox 360 become the exclusive home of online Marvel gaming.

The deal allows Microsoft Game Studios to develop Massively Multiplayer Online Games just for X360, a position underscored by worldwide president of the Consumer

Media Group at Marvel Enterprises, Tim Rothwell. He recently stated that the agreement with Microsoft was the 'one and only' for Marvel in MMO gaming.

Details are still thin on the ground, except for confirmation by Microsoft's Peter Moore that the game will hit the shelves in 2008 and will use every Marvel character that can be crammed into the game.

GUILTY GAMING

DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN

Draw-in distance is a dirty phrase in Black Hawk Down; which means this is an ideal game for bedroom snipers, as you can see for miles around. Watching yanks panic as an errant round kicks up sand by their feet is genius, matched only by their anger as the next round cracks their skull!



STREET FIGHTER: ANNIVERSARY **EDITION**

Yes, everyone raves about Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike, but everyone forgets about its B-side, packed with the original Street Fighter // games. And you know what? Sometimes, it's fun to play a game once renowned for being balanced, then cry as Balrog's headbutt throw takes off half vour head



STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO

Republic Commando is the Essex chip-shop girl of videogames rough, choppy, not nearly as popular as it thinks, but fun Probably because the grenades in RC are stupidly overpowered, and aimlessly throwing them can lead to random kills. Doesn't have a sexy chip smell, though



THE COST OF LIVE

Microsoft's pricing strategy in detail

to offer four packages to parental control means gamers wishing to sign- no one can sneak on up for the Xbox Live service. At the lowest end, surely designed as a taster package, is the £4.99 one month's subscription. Conversely at the other extreme is the do-all 12 month £39.99 offer.

The idea here to get as many people on Xbox Live as possible by picking how and when you want to play, which is why you won't need a credit card to enjoy the spoils of online gaming. Rather than pay for the Gold service online you will be able to buy credits from a retailer. for cash. Once paid up. the service will be free and running until your

MICROSOFT IS SET account runs out, and a vour account without permission.

> Further to this, Microsoft has revealed a variety of packages designed to offer extra value. The £39.99 deal will, in America at least, offer a full year's subscription, plus headset, free Live Arcade game, 200 free Live Market Place points, plus the equivalent to £10 off an Xbox 360 game (other packages are listed below).

> The structure of the deals means we can now have full control over how we play, whether its with prepaid sessions or monthly top-ups.

THE DEALS IN FULL

12 Month Value Pack

- 12 month subscription
- Headset
- Live Arcade game Billiards
- £10 game discount
- 200 free Live Market Place points

12 Month **Gold Card**

E 29 90

E1191919

- 12 month subscription
- One month free subscription

Three Month Value Pack

• Three month subscription

- Headset
- Live Arcade game Joust £7 discount on a game
- 100 free Market Place points

One Month Gold Card

E4 99

One month's subscription



A quick guide to gaming customisation

DESIGN FOR LIVE

OKAY, SO YOU'VE just bought *Forza*, you've played a few races and now you're ready to go online, but there's a small problem – you need your own identity, which means you need to create your own custom design. While this may initially seem daunting, and far too complicated to do properly, it's really not. Rinny PMS shows you how...

NO.1 CREATING A DECALS IN FORZA



First things first. Find a design to copy. It's no good attempting some artistic masterpiece without inspiration. Replicate posters or cover art, as these will have already had designers plan the image for best spatial impact. — Also, add things like body kits before starting your design. Adding them later often reveals imperfections.



Forza's car editor uses shapes and layers to achieve patterns. Most things can actually be created from a basic three shapes – circles, squares and triangles. Use the re-size tools to manipulate shapes and suitably replicate the 2D image you're copying. Remember, squares squash down into straight lines if you reduce one axis' value enough.



Don't be tempted to make a tiny piece for every part of the shape you want to create. Plan ahead and you will find that often the best way to create a lot of the shapes isn't necessarily to continuously lay shape over shape, but to add one big shape and then cut into it by adding on shapes in the same colour as the background.



Using this technique, letters and words can be created. Simply lay down a basic shape, such as a circle, and then blank out parts of it using the straight edges of squashed squares and the curves of circles and ellipses that are the same colour as the background. It's time consuming, but the possibilities with shapes are infinite.



When making a design, keep things big and bold. My Final Fantasy VII car is very simple and iconic but works well on the racecourse. Small details are all well and good, but can easily get lost in the heated frenzy of a twisting track. People will respond best to something they easily see as it flashes by them on a tight corner.



And there we have it. With a little time, patience and experimentation, anything is possible – and you'd be surprised at what can be achieved with a bit of effort. However, always remember each side has a 100-layer limit. This may sound like a lot, but it soon vanishes as you start to add small details, such as fades on colours, etc.

Keep it in the Clan

With online gaming significantly on the rise, we've decided to dedicate a portion of **X360** to one of the driving forces behind this trend – clans. And where better than with...



PMS CLAN

X360: How did PMS start?

Mistletoe: PMS started as an antidote to the sort of environment you typically get in competitive online games like Counter-Strike and Wolfenstein. It's a place for girl gamers to come together and play without harassment, and the frustration that you can get when you're playing with people more concerned with what you look like than your strategy and skill.

X360: Do you hold 'events'?
Mistletoe: We've been hosting Girls
Night In for Xbox, which is a monthly
event on Xbox Live where challengers
can come and play with us. We also
recently took part in a girls versus
boys tournament, and we've made
appearances at gaming parties as well.
Rinny: If you see the PMS logo on
the Xbox.com Live Calendar, or on your
Dashboard, that means we're ready to
challenge you. Also keep an eye out on
our community site (www.pmsclan.
com/uk), as we shall post about every

X360: How did the GameStation tour come about?

event we'll be seen at.

Rinny: The GameStation tour was a great opportunity for us. I work at GameStation full-time and happened to find out that they are very interested in supporting local teams. When I asked them about supporting a girl-gaming team they were so enthusiastic. We got

the support to plan a ten-date tour in GameStation stores across the UK, where we held *Burnout 3* tournaments.

x360: Are you just recruiting or are you making cash too? Mistletoe: No cash! We're trying to raise the profile of PMS, and of gamers in the UK generally, and we're giving away free t-shirts to new recruits. Violexxx: Only in my dreams... only

in my dreams.

Rinny: NEVER! We don't sell our t-shirts here in the UK. We do have a Cafépress store that allows people to buy PMS merchandise, even PMS thongs! But that's for the US girls really, and it doesn't generate any real cash.

X360: How are you treated by male gamers?

Mistletoe: It ranges from sheer profanity and obscene comments as soon as I open my mouth, to stalker-type behaviour. For some reason guys seem to become more macho around girls. In my experience, the trash talking and post-game boasting seems a lot worse when I play guys who don't know me.

Violexxx: I've had a range of reactions: guys who wish their girlfriends were as 'cool' as me and would play Halo 'till the early hours, and others who are overly interested in how I style my nether regions. The funniest is when you're being slagged off in-game, then we get to the post-game lobby and they

realise I'm a girl and send me a friend request!

LittleMissHalo:

Harassment comes thick and fast, although not all male gamers are like that! Some are very respectful of the clan. For instance, the H2o clan are big supporters of PMS, and help out a great deal.

X360: What's the oddest thing a man has 'requested' from you online? Mistletoe: Marriage. Violexxx: I've had requests for oral sex. I think it's probably my own fault for having XXX in my name!

LittleMissHalo:
I have been offered
MSN addresses so we
can talk "out of hours".
Needless to say, I've never
accepted them!

X360: So, do you like chatting to random males on Live?

Rinny: Of course! How else do you meet people?

Mistletoe: It's definitely fun to meet new people, but I have to be a bit careful.

Violexox: I love it, but that goes for chatting to people in general. It just so happens

to chat!

that 95 per cent of the people I play are male.

LittleMissHalo: I love the online community; I have some great friends online and frequently sign-in just

X360: Will you get Xbox 360s? Mistletoe: Not immediately. There's no way I can afford it on launch!

Violexxx: Definitely. I'm already pimping my arse to get one.

LittleMissHalo: | will be putting it on my Christmas list... | hope Father Christmas is reading this, as it will save me a stamp!

Rinny: Of course! I have no idea how I'll pay for it, mind.

X360: Which games are you most looking forward to? This Mistletoe: Quake 4, Perfect Dark

Zero, Halo 31

Violexxx: Gears Of War, Prey. LittleMissHalo: I am really looking forward to Prey.

Rinny: Project Gotham Racing 3, and my most anticipated life-eater — Final Fantasy XI.

X360: Any of you plan on getting the video camera?

Mistletoe: I'd probably use it to talk to the clan, mainly. I'm way too scared

Rinny (left) and Violexox (right) enthusiastically grope the large statue. They did this for about 15 minutes. And yes, this was taken in a toilet...



Rinny takes on all-comers on EA's Burnout Revenge at the recent GameStation tour in Southampton. Eat my dust, suckers!

of what would happen if guys realise, "that's a girl with a webcam". It's bad enough as it is.

LittleMissHalo: We will have to be selective about who we chat to.

Violexxx: I'll definitely use it.

Rinny: Of course I'll get the camera. I'll chat to ANYONE! I love social interaction and I can't wait to get to know more girls on Live!

X360: Will you wear special costumes?

LittleMissHalo: Spandex, leather. Who knows?

Violexxx: Maybe... Any suggestions?

X360: Yes, plenty... Ahem. Anyway, what plans are there on the horizon for PMS?

Mistletoe: We hope to get to some more gaming events, as well as launch our Xbox 360 division in the next couple of months. We've got more of the Girls Night In evenings coming, too!

X360: Anything you'd like to say to any potential PMSers?

LittleMissHalo: PMS rocks!

VISIT: WWW.PMSCLAN.COM/UK



And when the gaming's done, it's off to the pub.
Violexxx and Rinny settle down to enjoy a pleasingly
Xbox-themed drink. Yummy!



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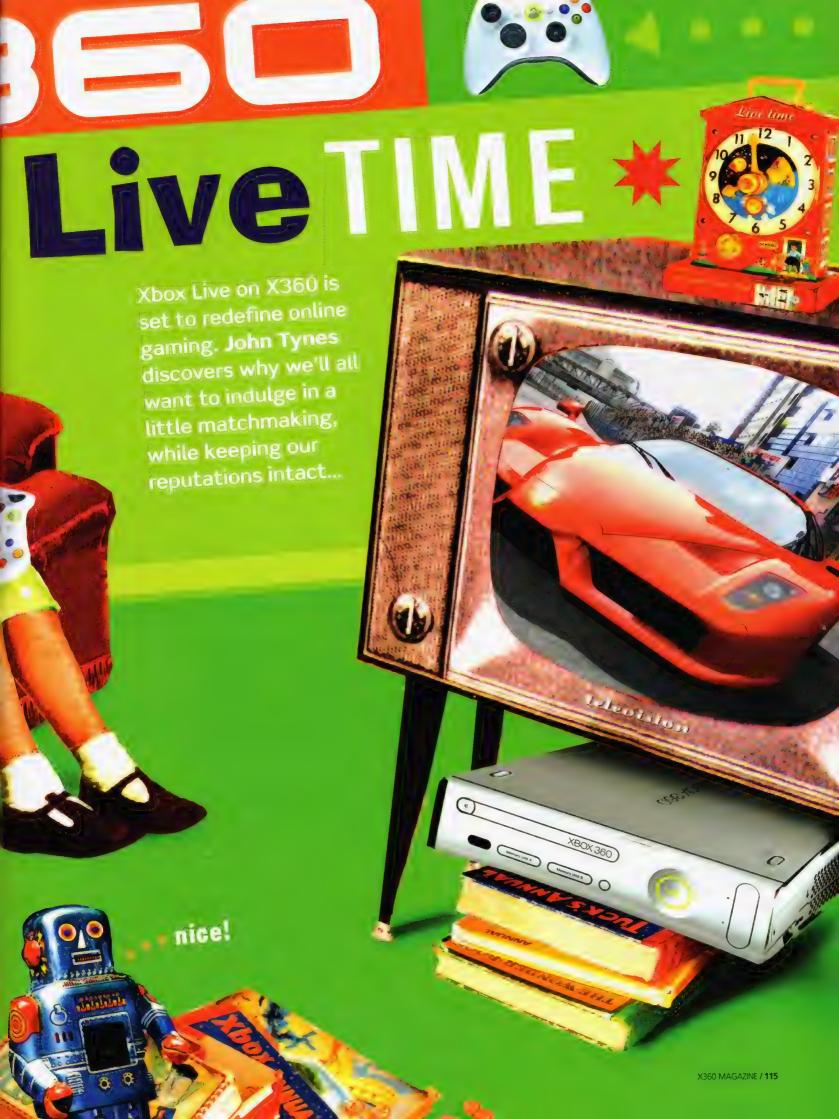
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Tive Time



HE EARLY DAYS OF XBOX LIVE

were like the Wild West of *Deadwood*: a filthy ghetto of backstabbing, foul-mouthed, inbred cretins with delusions of competency. As I sat in the lobby for my first game of *MechAssault*, I listened to two different players light up spliffs and compare notes on snack foods. ("Man, I

can't reach the Doritos.") The roll-out of Xbox Live appeared to coincide with the arrival of broadband internet in hemp-friendly trailer parks worldwide.



What happened next, however, proved to be the salvation of Xbox Live: we left the lobby and discovered that *MechAssault* online was addictive joy. The intensely satisfying whomp when another player's mech detonated spectacularly was followed by the delicious power-ups left behind, like the gold dust trickling downstream from a dead prospector. Once the Stone Cold map was released for download, I discovered a Team Destruction nirvana I'd never known.

Jump-cut three years, and a couple of million players have signed up for the online gaming experience. Now, with the imminent launch of Xbox 360, the Wild West days are over and good players are everywhere. Civilization has arrived and the law has ridden up just in the nick of time.

THE SECRET FORMULA

Xbox Live on the X360 has a lot of features, so many that it's hard to figure it all out. But there's a secret formula that makes sense of everything, and here it is: Xbox 360 Live = Halo 2 + Windows Media Center.

Halo 2 transformed Live by introducing real, ability-based matchmaking. Bungie also gave us great party play, a feature innovated by MechAssault late in its reign. You could form a group of friends and

Live is always on and instantly accessible in every single game

Silver and Gold
There's no prize for second place

You've heard there are two types of Xbox Live subscriptions, right? Both are always on, both allow voice chat and rankings, and both give access to the Marketplace. So what's the difference?

You can't play competitive online games or use video chat with Silver, which is free to everyone with an X360. The interesting word here is 'competitive', as Microsoft has struck a deal with Square to allow Silver users to play *Final Fantasy XI*, so it would seem a life-sapping world of MMORPGs is up for grabs. However, you are gonna need a hard drive to get the most from Live, which is an addition that will set you back a mere £69.99.

Chris Lewis, the European vice president of Home and Entertainment Division EMEA, sheds some light on the deal: "Basically, the Silver level membership that comes with Xbox 360 gives you access to the voice and text messaging

[as well as] access to the all-important Xbox Live Marketplace, where you canstart to trade with other people and work with other people to design skins or driving suits for racing games, etc." He continues to explain the premium deal: "And then there's Gold level. This gives you immediate access to the multiplayer online gameplay. You have voice and video chat, and you also have full access to online tournaments."

Basically, if you want to play on Live and you want to see your friend's face after you totally busted him in *PGR3*, you gotta lay down the ducats to get the Gold. It's that simple.



Ive Ime

players you just met, then stick together through game after game. Clan support was even there for organised play. But *Halo 2* was a closed system. All those great innovations meant nothing when you trotted out another Live game with old-school matchmaking. With Live on the X360, all those *Halo 2* features and a lot more are available to every game, all the time.

What about the media? Right out of the box, the X360 connects to your networked PCs and can access their content. You can play your music, check out your photographs, and watch your Windows Media Center movies. But this is Live, not just a dumb box: you can actually stream this stuff online to your friends. It's your own pirate radio station, with music and slideshows sent right over the internet to your buddies across the world.

Your PC isn't the only thing the X360 hooks up. When a friend comes over with their iPod or even a PSP, you can plug it into the X360 and jam their tunes right on the spot. The ultra-trippy interactive music visualizer will surely please all those hempfriendly trailer-park gamers. And because Live is always on and instantly accessible in every single game, you can also chat with friends by voice or even by video. It works anytime your Xbox 360 is turned on, so you can play *Gears Of War* while chatting with your buddy who is watching a DVD.

WHO ARE YOU?

But let's get back to the games. On the new Live, your gamertag isn't everything anymore. You have a Gamer Card, which includes your tag, your photo, and some great new stuff that takes *Halo 2's* matchmaking and ratchets it way, way up.

First off is your Reputation. Microsoft doesn't like to name names but we will: its R&D guys ripped this feature off from eBay, and thank God they did. Everyone you play with can give you a quick





thumbs-up/thumbs-down rating, and the average score is your Reputation. If you didn't like somebody, the matchmaking will try to avoid pairing you up again – and if you did think a player was cool, there's a good chance you'll play together later on.

Then there's the Gamerscore. The Gamerscore doesn't care if you're a jerk or not: it just cares how good you are. Every game you play, even offline games, adds to your Gamerscore, whether you're a *Perfect Dark Zero* elite sniper or you've put fifty hours into the new *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*. You can also examine all the numbers behind it, showing all the games you've played and all the special medals you've earned.

Finally, you pick a Gamerzone. This is a loose description of your style of play, and there are four options: R&R gamers are recreational players looking for some online rest & relaxation; Pro gamers are hardcore competitive video athletes; Family gamers are into casual games or have young children; and Underground gamers are presumably ub3r masterb8ter10.

What does Microsoft do with all that? Matchmaking, to the nth level. If I'm an R&R gamer with a positive reputation and a modest gamerscore, I should end up playing with other reasonable, friendly gamers. Meanwhile, the Pro gamers don't have to put up with us novices, the jerks will play with other jerks, and we'll all be happy.



Money for nothing.

Virtual goods bought for cold hard cash
The Xbox Live Marketplace is where you pay cash for virtual
goods, such as new levels or cars for racing games. It works on

a debit system, where you pay Microsoft money for a fat stack of "points," then spend those points to buy stuff. This means companies can sell you a new flame decal for your virtual Maserati at a cost of ten pence, because Microsoft adds all those little purchases together and cuts one fat cheque. Will it be cool? What definitely would be cool is if Microsoft lets gamers sell stuff to each other, like maxed-out characters or rare weapons in RPGs. It made some early noise about this idea, but has since thrown that kitten in the river. If Sony's Station Exchange auction house works out for its PC MMORPGs, however, look for more developers to turn virtual bits into hard cash.

Tive Time

Seven if you're watching a movie, somebody can invite you to a game

THE DOWNSIDE

For all of this matchmaking to work, Microsoft needs tons of players smacking away on a lot of different games – and doing it all the time. But with so many games on the market, it's tough for a non-blockbuster title to maintain an online community – not every game is *Halo 3*, and six weeks after an also-ran shooter hits the market, you'll be lucky to find anyone playing it.

To mitigate this risk, the boys of Redmond have two aces up their sleeves. The first is persistence: Xbox Live is always on, every minute that your X360 is, and even if you're watching a movie, somebody on your friends' list can invite you to a game. The more people that use their Xboxes as entertainment centres, the bigger the pool of connected, available players.

Microsoft's second ace is growth. If its estimate of a new Live gamer every thirty seconds holds true, there are 2.2 million of us right now. But almost half of that number has joined since *Halo 2* shipped, and they sure didn't sign up to play *Fight Club*. If the early adopters of Xbox 360 are mostly existing Live gamers, that growth curve is going to flatline for a while.

What if there aren't enough players? Imagine a hardcore deathmatch game with R&R, Pro, and Family gamers all at once, and half the players are using racist profanity. Hmm.



Itve Time



XBOX LIVE SILVER LEVEL

- Create an online
 Gamer Profile
- Access the Xbox LiveMarketplace
- Engage in voice and text messaging
- Talk to a single friend at
 a time using voice chat
- Receive video messages.
 from Gold level members
- An additional fee to a third-party will allow you to play an MMORPG,
 Final Fantasy XI anyone?

XBOX LIVE GOLD LEVE

All the features of Silver level, and additionally:

- Play multiplayer games online
- Video chat
- Multiplayer online tournaments:
- Participate in regular Microsoft sponsored Xbox Live online programming, such as Game With Fame, Play And Win, and other 'prime time' activities

If only there were some big online games coming for Xbox 360 that could keep those subscriber numbers rising. Like, say, Perfect Dark Zero, Project Gotham Racing 3, Dead Or Alive 4, Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter, Gears Of War, and that little game from Bungie that the richest man in the world intends to use as a pimp stick upside Sony's crack-ho head.

Yeah, that might help.

THE BIG GUNS

Microsoft says – quietly – that Rare's *Perfect Dark Zero* is the *Halo* of this generation's launch window. It could be right. *PDZ*'s online matches have 50+ players, who can be grouped into teams and sub-grouped into squads. Players can place waypoints for their team-mates to co-ordinate tactics. Spawn points are teleport chambers that double as weapons caches, and you'll fight to claim the best ones for your team. Maps are huge and get even bigger, opening up more areas as more players parachute in. As for your online avatar, the higher your ranking in the game, the cooler your character looks.

Project Gotham Racing 3 is going to show the world why Xbox Live is the ultimate gaming network. This title supports everything. Create your own racecourses and upload them

to Live; share screenshots taken in-game with your buddies to show off how cool you are; watch live races between top-ranked gamers via Gotham TV; buy new cars at the Marketplace; and some more crazy stuff they won't even talk about yet. Microsoft wants to turn PGR3 into a true virtual sport, and Live is the only place this can bappen.

More than its technology, the Xbox experience has been defined by Live 99

Fighting-game fans know that *Dead Or Alive* is the Xbox's premier beat-'em-up franchise. When it went online with *Dead Or Alive Ultimate*, it introduced the idea of Arcade Lounges, where eight players would join a lobby and cycle through two-on-two matches, while players not in the current



match could watch the action. With *Dead Or Alive 4* on the X360, those lounges are going to hold a couple of dozen people cycling through a wide variety of fight modes and literally watching

the competition's every move. Could this be the beginning of DOA TV?

Squad-based shooters have come on strong, and Live on the X360 has two amazing ones: Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter and Gears Of War. The new Ghost Recon pushes command-and-control into new territory, with picture-in-picture views from your squadmates and extensive

communications and tactics support. But Epic's 2006 title *Gears Of War* has something way cooler: a full-length co-operative campaign that other players can jump into at any time. Imagine you're in the middle of a big battle with one of *Gears'* trademark five-story monstrosities that has just smashed through a building.

You're crouching behind cover, wounded, desperate, and then there he is: your new pal Draknord23, charging in fresh and full of hate for all monsters. Splinter Cell innovated true co-operative multiplayer, but Gears Of War is going to redefine it.

Then there's *Halo 3*. Check back on that one in 2006, because Microsoft isn't saying jack until it's got the PlayStation3 launch date dead in its sights.

ALL LIVE ALL THE TIME

Even more than its great technology, the Xbox experience has been defined by Live. Without it, the Xbox 360 is in fact just a PlayStation2.5 with a smaller library.

Sony is a late arrival to the online gaming party and it still hasn't got it right. Nintendo doesn't even take it seriously. But half the planet is on the internet, because connecting with people across the globe to chat, play, and hang out is damn good fun. Xbox Live on the X360 is going to be like Y2K all over again: a global party that will rock the world one gamer at a time.



THE LATEST DOWNLOADS, UPLOADS, GAME RELEASES, TOURNAMENTS AND ONLINE HIGH ROLLERS

Halo 2 is the Chelsea of Xbox - hated by elitists, swamped with weird accents, takes top spot every time. Shame there's no room for an 'and Bungie is

PRO EVOLUTION

Cue the sound of gnashing teeth and a

PROJECT GOTHAM **RACING 2**

3 is a fireworks show, nice for swooning ladies but not for proper MAN racers. That leaves Project Gotham Racer 2 to clean up in this genre.

SPLINTER CELL

the eye without blubbing, but the cat-and-mouse play is a thrilling detour from

CONKER: LIVE AND RELOADED

They can't. It really confuses them. (Note:

NEED TO KNOW...

LIVE CHECKLIST: BLACK HAWK DOWN

- You get to play as a sniper?
- You get to play as a medic?
- Anyone actually play as a medic?
- Those playing as a medic hilariously branded "gay" by team-mates?
- Deluded American shouting "Cover me!"?
- Deluded American runs into a hail of bullets before you can react, gets shot, then calls you a noob?



Gaming Night over at GamerTag. com. Get yourself registered and see what the 6,000 other XBL Brits here are playing (it's not Capcom Fighting Jam!).

TH Xbox gets Tiger's PGA Tour 2006, with EA including online tournaments and features actually supported in-game, rather than via clumsy websites. Good move.

will mark two weeks since FIFA the smart money says this is when to check back on Xbox.com for the first UK FIFA

18тн UK forum GreenHillZone. com has set-up a weekly Fight Night, every Tuesday from 8pm until midnight. The main game of choice right now is Street Fighter: Anniversary Edition.

Evolution Soccer 5. Star Wars: Battlefront II and Battlefield 2: Modern Combat are all released today. Hat trick! Assuming you can afford them all.

through flick-book for a US Xbox Live on this date.

FIVE LIVE GAMES

Abramovich!' analogy.

SOCCER 4

Our only gripe with this is that you can't skip your opponent's goal replays. million S-pads pressing Start in misery, anger and frustration

Forza Motorsport is too shiny. Burnout

CHAOS THEORY

It takes dedication and weeks of training before you can even look this mode in the main adventure.

It's messy, it's chaotic, it's fun. Ask someone to explain what's happening. don't try this on Americans! For some reason, they actually know!)

(360 LOVES.)

AS DEVELOPERS work their medieval magic on Xbox Live, it's the aptly named Bizarre Creations that has come up with the most interesting feature yet - Gotham TV. This feature will allow Project Gotham Racing 3 players to choose from six channels, such as The Friends Channel that lets you watch your friends race. Likewise, The Gotham Heroes Channel might sound like something that Batman looks forward to on weekday nights, but in fact it lets you watch the top-ranked players in action. Today's Highlights, Hall of Fame, Gotham Heroes Archive and Gotham TV round off the set. It just makes the wait for Microsoft's racer even more painful.

X360 ALSO LOVES: Perfect Dark Zero's 50 players online, Kokoro from Dead Or Alive 4, X-Cam.









5TH Community

14_{Th}
This date 2006's release, so tournament.

battle Americans lag in Dead Or Alive: Ultimate? Then head to DOACentral.com tournament held

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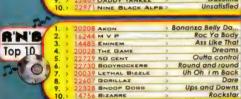
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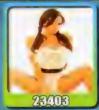






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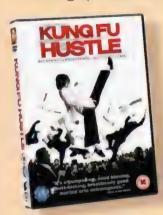
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Kicking up a storm with action movie fans



REPLAY

COMMENTARY

>> You can hear Stephen Chow and his mates chuckling away in Mandarin on the commentary track but thankfully, it's subtitled

INTERVIEW

>> The interview with Stephen Chow is insightful, revealing his good-natured side

OUTTAKES

» The usual set of "ho ho. I messed up a stunt!" larks. Still entertaining though.

INFORMATION

Sony • £19.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1 **DIRECTOR** / Stephen Chow STARRING / Stephen Chow and friends

RATING - - - - - -



oud. That's what Kung Fu Hustle is. Stephen Chow's flick has been wooing cinemagoers and import audiences for some time and this ear-clattering film has the potential to make your speakers bleed

Mouthy gangster wannabe Sing, played by Stephen Chow, is desperate to join the Axe Gang and goes to a quiet housing complex in an effort to get noticed. He accidentally starts a war between the landlords of the housing complex and the Axe Gang, basically because he's loud. The landlady who takes offence to Sing is also loud. Buildings getting destroyed with one hand, again is loud. From the harp assassins who use ghostly swords to the Matrix- inspired courtyard brawl to The Beast - yep, you guessed it everything here is loud.

The noisy chaos is almost to be expected. Anyone who's seen previous Stephen Chow films will recognise Kung Fu Hustle's template straight from the off - physical comedy, elastic violence, pained grimaces - but rather than kicking footballs around, it's gangsters who are being kicked through rooftops, onto balconies and across patios. The 1940's Chicago gangster chic gives it the style, Chow provides the laughs and the many fight scenes provide the volume.

While Kung Fu Hustle's pace occasionally sags in order to allow room for some rather sickly romantic sub-plots, it's not long before the anarchy catches up with the film again and ushers it back towards action that doesn't disappoint.

Anyone looking for over-the-top, exaggerated comic book-style action will lap this up. Just make sure you have your remote control's volume button at the ready.

DVD EXTRAS: Without descending into spoiler territory, when anyone puts their hand through an entire building, it's always going to be a spilt-beer-on-the-screen moment... RVAN KING

DVDS

TRANSFORMERS -THE MOVIE RECONSTRUCTED

Metrodrome • £15.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1

DIRECTOR / Nelson Shin

STARRING / Voices of Orson Welles, Leonard Nimoy, Eric Idle

RATING / • • • • •



THIS RECONSTRUCTED FEATURE-

length movie of the Eighties' toy franchise will drop a veil of nostalgia over anyone old enough to remember drainpipe jeans and rock music played like God intended, with perms flying to the strum of a power chord.

The metal-mutating action sees the death of Optimus Prime, the resurrection of Megatron and the appearance of a planet-munching monstrosity know as, Unicron. Twin all of this with some stellar voice acting and a guitar-whaling, hair-metal soundtrack and you'll find yourself with a pretty enjoyable animated adventure on your hands.

Nonetheless, while it may be a passable movie, after some consideration we're still left wondering why anyone but diehard fans would pay over 15 quid for something that can picked up in any retailer for a third of that price. On the plus side, the picture and audio have received an upgrade and the extras have been fleshed out, but this disc certainly won't entice any fan already in possession of the original.

Keith Hennessev



ROCK ON / Retro fans will lap up the Eighties softrock action, the rest of us will stare on in confusion

THE KUNG FU MASTER

Tai-Seng Ent. • £17.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1

DIRECTOR / Benny Chan STARRING / Donnie Yen

RATING / • • • • •

EXTRAS RATING / • • • •

AFTER BLEEDING HONG Kong's back catalogue of kung-fu flicks dry, DVD companies are now turning to the Far East's kung-fu TV archives. Tai-Seng has done a commendable job of crunching this hefty television series down to DVD

size but sadly, there's nothing that can be done to disguise the meagre budget. The choreography isn't as punchy as it should be, with quick editing trying to disguise that few of the actors here are martial artists. What saves this is the solid story, which develops throughout the epic threehour running time, and Bey Logan's encyclopaedic kung-fu knowledge on the commentary track.

As a footnote to classic martial arts entertainment this an interesting TV series, well worth a look if you're into The Logan's work. However, the quality isn't really there for causal fans.

Ryan King

PREY FOR ROCK & ROLL

Black Horse • £15.99 • 4:3 • Dolby 2.0 **DIRECTOR** / Alex Steyermark STARRING / Gina Gershon, Drea De Matteo Lori Petty

RATING / O O O O

EXTRAS RATING / • • • • • •

WITH AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

script penned by punk rocker Cheri Lovedog, Prey For Rock & Roll looks to provide us with an insight into the troubles of an all-girl grunge band.

The spotlight falls on the band's lead singer Jacki, who, having turned 40, is beginning to question her devotion to the band and to music as a whole.

Far from being an interesting peek behind the rock world's velvet curtain, this is more a sociological examination of female exploitation - short-changing any rockers looking for a good time.

Unfortunately, the rookie director has also tried to shoehorn in too many themes - rape, domestic violence and drug abuse to name but a few - which means that the story completely loses any credibility it may have had

Prey For Rock & Roll... You'll be praying for the credits to roll.

Keith Hennessey

MALEVOLENCE

Anchor Bay • £16.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 2.0 **DIRECTOR** / Steven Mena STARRING / Samantha Dark, Richard Glover, R.Brandon Johnson

RATING / • • • • • •

EXTRAS RATING / • • • •

WHEN A YOUNG boy is kidnapped and forced to witness the unspeakable crimes of a deranged madman there can only really be one outcome, and we're not talking about devoted life to social services.



TERROR TACTIC / Malevolence is good but not as good as it thinks it is

The boy grows up to fill his kidnappers shoes and is now hell bent on running his knife through anything with a pulse. So when a bank robbery goes wrong and a group of desperate felons end up in his dilapidated house of horrors, the slashing begins.

Though perhaps not breaking any new ground, this low budget offering pays fitting homage to classic horror titles such as Psycho and Halloween. With its mix of spine-tingling tones, masked maniac and sinister slaughterhouse this makes an adequate addition to any horror collection.

Keith Hennessey

XXX THE NEXT LEVEL

Universal • £16.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1

DIRECTOR / Steven Mena STARRING / Samuel L. Jackson, Ice Cube

RATING / O O O O EXTRAS RATING / • • • •

ICE CUBE REPLACES Vin Diesel in Rob Cohen's street-style James Bond franchise, with mixed results.

If you want to empty your head of any kind of deep thoughts, then xXx The Next Level is the movie for you.

STAR WARS **EPISODE** III TWO DISC **BOXSET WILL** BE HITTING THE SHELVES 12 NOVEMBER WITH UNSEEN **FOOTAGE**

FOX PRESS RELEASE

BATMAN **BEGINS** TWO-DISC COLLECTOR'S EDITION WILL BE ON SALE 21 OCTOBER, **FEATURING EXCLUSIVE** OUTTAKES

WARNER BROS.

>>

INFORMATION

Titan Books • Price: £7.99 **AUTHOR /** Grant Morrison **ARTIST / Frank Quitely**

RATING / ••••

andit (a dog) Pirate (a rabbit) and Tinker (a cat) go on a journey to find their long-lost owners and so the story is set for an enchanting adventure as our heroes discover the meaning of love and belonging. This is no candy-coloured tale of

sweetness, however, since these three have escaped from a military laboratory. They've been experimented on and can speak in single syllables. They wear

power armour and are heavily armed. They are being hunted by men with guns.

Morrison's tale is a hauntingly beautiful one perfectly detailed by Quitely's simultaneously unflinchingly violent and serene graphical style. Managing to be both romantic and painfully realistic and without pandering to anthropomorphism, We3 is a work of depth that depicts our world from an animal-world view without resting on Watership Down's spirituality or Tarka The Otter's pathos. Zenith and The Invisibles showed that the author was easily one of the planet's most important superhero writers and We3 proves that he's not corralled by genre and is a masterful storyteller even when his main characters can barely speak and all they want is shelter, food and, in the case of the wonderful Bandit - to know that they are a "gud dog"

HARD COPY: Think of it as Homeward Bound with the animals in mech suits. We3 has already been optioned for movie treatment and we reckon it would be perfect for CGI.

Will Johnston



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

>> Grant Morrison has been writing comics for 25 years for American and British publications. His more notable efforts include Arkham Asylum, The Invisibles, Zenith, X-Men and Fantastic Four. He lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland.

Opening with a cartoonish escape from a military prison. Cube then proceeds to recruit his boyz from the hood in an effort to save the president of America, race against a bullet train and explode almost everything in sight.

Cube does a decent job in a role that requires no more than to look threatening, rap a bit and shoot people, which really sums up the whole film.

lan Dean



ON THE EDGE / Ice Cube acts tougih for the cameras in this lame sequel to xXx

BOOKS

THE RING COMPANION

Titan Books • PRICE: 17.99 AUTHOR: Denis Meikle

RATING / • • • •

EVERYTHING YOU EVER wanted to know about *Ring* is covered in this hefty tome. Everything. The ghost tradition that lies behind long-haired Sadako, the female journalist that replaced the male lead from the original books, director Hideo Nakata's influences for this film. This book serves as much more than an in-depth analysis of *Ring* as Denis Meikle frequently flies off on all sorts of tangents to talk about subjects ranging from Japanese myths that formed the backbone of

the film, to the history of ghost stories. It's fair to say the book is more of a vehicle for Meikle to indulge himself on a general overview of ghost films and Japanese horror. Towards the end of the book, Meikle does overcompensate and lets his enthusiasm for *Ring* get away from him without providing the same insight found elsewhere, but in general, an essential read for fans.

Ryan King

FOWLER: MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Macmillan • PRICE: 18.99 AUTHOR: Robbie Fowler

RATING / # # * *

THIS "EXPLOSIVE AND controversial" autobiography, as it turns out, simply treads over old ground that cheap tabloids have covered many times before. It often feels like the writing is dragged along with it too, as the book hastily lurches from one incident to the next. Nor does it help that this is released about five years too late. There's a certain poignancy as Fowler looks to the future at a time when he can't even keep Darius Vassell out of the starting line-up, but certainly not one that justifies the asking price.

Ryan King

MUSIC

'LATE REGISTRATION' KANYE WEST

Roc-A-Fella • Price: £8.99

RATING / • • • •

IN SHORT, IT'S GOOD news. Late Registration is 22 more tracks that fit the Kanye West template established by his debut, with the 28-year-old rapper wisely decided not to tamper with the formula that made College Dropout a surprise success. Diamonds From Sierra Leone is the first single that shows while he relies on the same old tricks – sluggish bass-lines tied to spedup samples, in this case Shirley Bassey's Diamonds Are Forever – they're every



VIERA TH37PV500CAB

One of the best HD TV's out there

INFORMATION

Panasonic • Price: £2199 • 37 inch www.panasonic.co.uk/plasma-tv/ th37pv500cab/index.htm

RATING / @ @ @ @

hile it may be out of the price range of many, Panasonic's Viera TH37PV500CAB is a stunning TV. And with a pleasing, minimalist design it is undoubtedly capable of blending into any front-room media set-up.

The Viera boasts Panasonic's new and much touted G8 brand of plasma panels that through cunning use of Panasonic's Deep

Black Filter and an anti-reflection costing on the panel's surface, produces richer, deeper blacks and improved brightness levels.

G8 plasma panels also optimise the gas composition ratio

to increase lighting by 10 per cent, further improving the overall quality of the picture.

This TV also uses the Viera Colour Management System, which, according to the manufacturer, displays more on-screen colours than any other Plasma TV. Apparently, not that we can identify this with any precision using our normal eyesight, the Viera uses up to 2048 levels of gradation and produces the equivalent of 8.6 million colours

 it certainly sounds impressive.

Importantly, this rather fancy talk does mean that the TV is at the leading edge of plasma technology, boasting definition and clarity of the like that cheaper models can only dream of but unfortunately will never achieve. This

is a perfect TV to partner with your new Xbox 360 this Christmas – well, as long as you have that sort of money laying around, that is.

EXTRAS: In addition to displaying rich and clear images, this TV has another couple of tricks up its sleeve. Firstly, it has a Freeview tuner built in, allowing you 40 odd channels straight out of the box. Secondly, it accepts SD and PC cards, allowing you to view images and video stored on the cards as well as record TV programmes back onto them. Bye bye VHS.

BREAK IT DOWN

"">" 94cm 'VIERA' 16:9
Widescreen Panel
Viera Colour
Management System
HD Panel
SD Card Slot
Freeview DVB — Built-in Digital
Terrestrial Tuner
1024x720 VGA Resolution
1080i and 720p Compatible
3 x SCART Connections
HDMI Compatible
Smart Sound Speaker System

bit as engaging and infectious as ever. And so Late Registration plays it safe throughout, sticking to what Kanye West knows best, as tracks such as Crack Music brings the noise while Heard 'Em Say shows a sensitive side rarely seen in this genre. People who didn't understand his appeal the first time around won't find anything here to change their minds, but for his fans, Late Registration almost dispels the myth that the second album is tricky. Kanye West has made it look effortlessly easy.

Ryan King

A BREATH OF FRESH ATTIRE THE MITCHELL BROTHERS

The Beats • 8.99

www.themitchellbrothers.co.uk



THE MITCHELL BROTHERS are nothing to do with Eastenders and everything to do with Mike Skinner from The Streets, as this debut album is the first release from his new label. Skinner's fingerprints are everywhere for all to see - cockney geezer accents, minimalist production and lyrics about being stopped by the police on the way to the chip shop. This is much angrier than The Streets as seen with Routine Check and Harvey Nicks but sadly, this debut is nowhere near as consistent either, with a few too many bum-notes to really win you over.

Ryan King

GAME MUSIC ROUND-UP

Sumthing Else • 8.99

ROBOTECH INVASION / • • • • • • HITMAN CONTRACTS / O O O O O HITMAN / • • • • • HITMAN 2 / O O O O

SINCE UBISOFT MANAGED to rope Amon Tobin into twiddling the dials

to give Chaos Theory frenzied drum clattering, gaming soundtracks have become popular again. Which is fortunate because Robotech: Invasion OST shows why they fell out of favour to begin with - what works as a soundtrack doesn't always work as a standalone album and the bland techno piddling here minus the game's explosions just doesn't stir the blood. Hitman: Contracts is in less danger of sending you to sleep as its moody paranoiac ambience doesn't need Agent 47's chrome dome to shine. Best of all is the Hitman/Hitman 2 double album. It's every bit as good as Contracts but with two albums, you get to pick your poison. Very cool.

Ryan King

HARDWARE

ACER AT3201W

Acer • £799 • 32 inch LCD http://www.acer.co.uk/acereuro



OK, SO ACER isn't normally a brand you think of when upgrading to superior audiovisual equipment, but for the price, this 32-inch LCD is a wonder.

Sure, £800 isn't exactly cheap, but when you consider the picture quality and wealth of connection options, this holds its own admirably against HD TVs costing hundreds more.

Importantly, 1080i and 720p are supported, and the TV has component connectivity, RGB Scart, S-Video and DVI along with D-Sub for connecting to a PC, making this a highly accommodating and able machine.

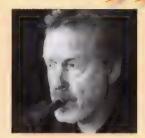
Jay Filmer



COMPETITION WIN 5 COPIES OF THE The Chronides Of Riddick Director's Cut DVD from Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd is out now. To win one of five copies, just answer this question: WHICH GAME TO FILM WILL STAR VIN DIESEL? Hitman Dead Or Alive Sonice Riddick Giveaway, Magazine and Issue No. 117 South Was

ON THIS FILM WE HAD 1,700 PEOPLE FOR BREAKFAST, 2,000 FOR LUNCH AND 60 PER CENT WERE MUSLIM

RIDLEY SCOT



The man behind the Kingdom Of Heaven settles down to tell X360 all about his new DVD

360: WHY WAS THIS SUBJECT SO EXCITING?

SCOTT: It was a massive adventure. I think as filmmakers we are the last of the explorers. We are allowed to go to these amazing places, set up with our crews and tell these stories. I see the knights of that period as the cowbovs of their era. The knight represents someone on the leading edge of his culture at that time. The film was interesting because there is a powerful subtext about this period of The Crusades that frankly hasn't been told before.

X360: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE **REACTION WILL BE FROM THE** ISLAM COMMUNITY?

SCOTT: I think the reaction is going to be pretty good actually, I think I'll be able to go on holiday in the Lebanon any time I want. The way we portray Muslims feels accurate to me 1 know it is accurate because I cast guys who are Muslim. For the last six years I was dealing with Muslims doing three big movies in Morocco, so I know a lot of Muslim people there who work with me. On this film we had 1,700 people for breakfast, 2,000 for lunch and 60 per cent were Muslim. I think we give a very good balanced view of what may have happened at that particular time. Some Historians say that the film has been badly researched. But 99 per cent of those people haven't seen anything of the film or read the script, so they are basing their opinions on speculation.

X360: WHAT ABOUT THE MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS AT THE BATTLE OF HATTIN BY **MUSLIM KING SALADIN?**

SCOTT: We dealt with the aftermath of the massacre at the Battle of Hattin, but I decided I didn't want to show another huge bloodbath. This was the most famous battle of the Muslim dominance over the Christians ever, where the Christian army really was

foolhardy to go out and fight in that climate and at that time of year. I think they lost because they were simply not as strong and powerful as the Muslim army. But I didn't want to have a massacre on top of the battle portrayed on screen. So it was my choice.

X360: DO WE LEARN ANYTHING FROM HISTORY AND THE **CRUSADES IN PARTICULAR?**

SCOTT: Of course, though we keep repeating bad behaviour, don't we? But you watch and you learn and you study. Hopefully the majority of the world is getting better. I think what has really happened very clearly of course is that there is no colonialisation as it was anymore, we lost the British Empire ages ago. And of course we used and abused that power, didn't we, basically getting something for nothing? We paid the price for that. So hopefully if anyone tries it again they will be stopped and prevented. We won't be able to impose our will on other people. That went down with the Cold War. Actually I am going to do a film about that subject called The Company. It's about the CIA in Russia and The Iron Curtain.

X360: DO YOU EVER GET INTIMIDATED BY THE HUGE **BUDGETS OF A FILM?**

SCOTT: No, not at all, I never get intimidated, it is just experience. I have always got lost in my own fantasy. I learned to trust my intuition. Even when I was younger doing commercials, I was like that. I did all the Chanel commercials for years and had to meet the owner and creative director of Chanel. I was good at selling my ideas and fantasies. I really enjoyed creating worlds. When I started my company at 27 years old making commercials, it was so successful and we were doing so well financially that I didn't even think about making films for 13 years. By running a business, you learn about art and commerce, you can't separate them.

HENERY DUT NOW IT'S THE MONKEY!

INSIDE: PORTMAN | CORPSE BRIDE | HOPPER | GOAL | CRONENBERG | CAMEOS Is Cinderella Man a contender or pretender? HOW MARTY & BOBBY BECAME THE LORDS OF THE RING RAY From Goodfellas to Revolver THE ARISTOCRATS
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LE 29 OCTOBER

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EXCLSUIVE ACCESS

THIS AND NEW INFO ON ESE KILLER GAMES...



This is a subscription service, each club entitles you to loads of download credits and costs just £3 per week until you send stop to 84888. Callers must be 16+ and have bill payer's permission. The Ringtoneking Clubs entitle you to receive music news and the following credits each week redeemable at www.ringtoneking.co.uk - Silver Club:- 3 mono or poly ringtones and 7 Logos! Stars Club:- 5 Star Ringtones! Stars Platinum Club:- 2 Star Videoringtones! Gold Club:- 2 Realtones! Sound Effects Club:- 6 Sound Effects! Platinum Club:- 2 Video Ringtones! Wallpapers/Picture Messages/Logos Club:- 6 Pictures! Screensaver Club:- 6 Screensavers! Video Club:- 3 Videos! Games Club:- 2 Games! Software Club:- 2 Applications! The Theme Club:- 2 Mobile Themes! Java Games/Applications not available for "3" customers. Unused credits will be rolled over to next period. Related offers sent via SMS. Compatible handsets required. Check www.ringtoneking.co.uk for handset compatibility. Sent texts and WAP/GPRS/UMTS downloads charged at standard operator rate. PrePay users must have sufficient credit to receive orders. Service provided by Jamster International Sarl. Full T&Cs available at www.ringtoneking.co.uk. Helpline 0870 121 7397.



UNMISSABLE

You've read the feature, now watch the movie! (It rocks!)

EXCLUSIVE GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE /
LAUNCH TRAILER / MTV TEASER TRAILER /
SCREENSHOT MONTAGE / GALLERY

X360 DVD-ROM CONTENTS

CALL OF DUTY 2 CONDEMNED **DEAD OR ALIVE 4**



DEAD RISING ENCHANT ARM FINAL FANTASY XI FRAME CITY KILLER **GHOST RECON** ADVANCED WARFIGHTER **GUN** KING KONG **NINETY-NINE** NIGHTS PREY



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3 **QUAKE 4 RESIDENT EVIL 5** RUMBLE ROSES XX

FEATURES

INTRODUCING XBOX 360

Xbox 360 broken down, as Microsoft explains every awesome detail



XBOX 360 LAUNCH AT E3

Watch Microsoft's unveiling of its brand new baby, Xbox 360



XBOX 360 DASHBOARD

Guided tour of Xbox 360's dashboard, with each step explained



& A WITH ICROSOFT

Interactive Q & A panel, where you get to choose the questions!

Features: commune

- to Now is heat controlled in the Rhex 3607
- to the games all developed at 60 tpc? to the will you make content available?
- to What's the ping and play compatibility
- D Can I Granafar my Show Lived account?



X360 AUDIO COMMENTARIES

Listen to the alternative commentary to hear what we have to say about the games

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

"PGR 3 is a trophy title, and the casual fools will indeed swoon and stand wide-eyed"

TEASER TRAILER / GAMEPLAY TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY / FULL TRAILER / SCREENSHOTS MONTAGE / GALLERY



KING KONG

KING KONG VS T-REX
FOOTAGE / CHASE T-REX
FOOTAGE WITH COMMENTARY /
RAFT ESCAPE FOOTAGE



CONDEMNED

TEASER TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY /
LAUNCH TRAILER / GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE
/ SCREENSHOTS MONTAGE / GALLERY



Step-by-step guide on how to use your DVD-ROM

Insert the DVD and, using your Xbox DVD Movie Playback controller, press the directional buttons to navigate the menu.

Press Select to choose the option you want, and then use Back or Menu once you're done. Now sit back and watch your feature of choice.

GALLERY

3 To listen to our alternate audio on selected trailers, press Display. Press right twice for audio, then press Select for the commentary track.



THE NO. 1 BEST SELLER

'If you've ever enjoyed an online shooter then this is a must buy.' **Xbox World**

'This is the freshest online shooting experience since Halo 2. Our advice is simple – don't miss out on it.' Xbox World

Regular 50 Player online tournaments

See Xbox.com and vagusnet.com for details







BLACK HAWK DOWN

LEAVE NO MAN BEH

Somalia 1993. A nation devastated by a brutal civil war. Mohammad Farah Aidid, the most powerful of War Lords has declared war on UN Peacekeeping troops. Preventing food aid from getting to a starving nation his militia kill whoever get in their way. Using all your skills as a Special Forces Operator, you are thrust into the most intense battle situations. Your mission: Remove Aidid, Restore Order, and Restore Hope. Based on actual events, play 16 intense single player missions or be part of a 50 player game on Xbox Live™!

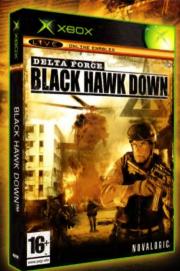
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